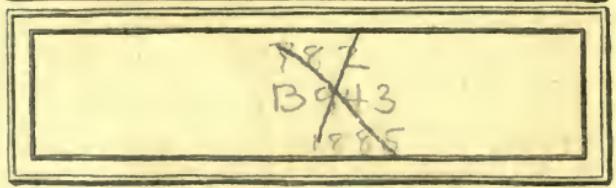
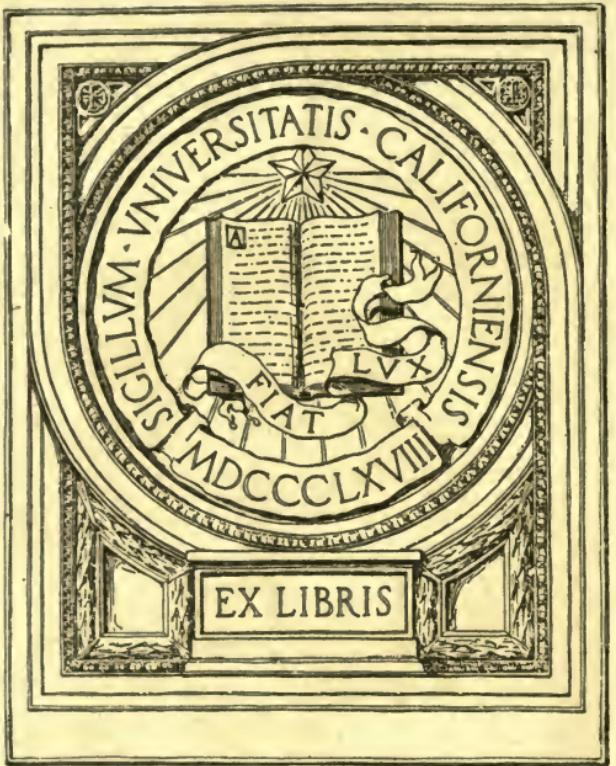


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EDONAKI



SELECTED POEMS

FROM

MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI

*So stood this Angelo
Four hundred years ago;
So grandly still he stands
Mid lesser worlds of Art,
Colossal and apart,
Like Memnon breathing songs across the desert sands.*

C. P. CRANCH.

SELECTED POEMS

FROM

MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI

With Translations

FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

"Ei dice cose, voi dite parole"

EDITED BY

EDNAH D. CHENEY

AUTHOR OF "GLEANINGS IN THE FIELDS OF ART"



BOSTON

LEE AND SHEPARD, PUBLISHERS

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BY EDNAH D. CHENEY.

THE CHILD
A PRACTICAL

PQ 4
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188.
MAI

TO

SETH W. CHENEY,

WHO FIRST MADE ME KNOW AND LOVE THE POEMS OF MICHELANGELO
AS THE EXPRESSION OF HIS OWN THOUGHT,

THIS WORK,

THE FRUIT OF THE SEED WHICH HE SOWED,

Is Reverently Dedicated.

E. D. C.

255105

P R E F A C E.

I HAVE long wished to introduce the poems of Michelangelo to the public, especially to young readers who, possessing a slight knowledge of Italian, would shrink from the difficulties of the text without assistance. For this reason I give the Italian according to the best authority, with an English translation, which will be interesting in itself, and also afford the young student the needed help in catching the thought of the original, which cannot always be obtained by a literal rendering of the text. The first reading is always given, unless otherwise indicated. I have used Guasti's valuable edition as my authority for the Italian.

As the difficulty of translation is great, I have not so much attempted to make new versions as to gather from every quarter those which would give the reader the best idea of the original. I have drawn less freely from Mr. Symonds's book than from others, not from any want of appreciation of his valuable work, but because it is still in the market, and I hope my readers will be led to study it themselves. My own translations are given either because no adequate one could be found, or because, being my own, they were dear to me, and represented my thought of the poem more nearly than those even of greater literary merit. I have never altered a word of a translation as published by its author, believing this to be simple justice, but have indicated in the notes those

passages in which I think he has not given the true meanings,—generally in consequence of having only an imperfect copy of the original.

When I first contemplated this work, I thought that the poems differed so greatly in merit that I could easily select a few and leave the rest; but a closer study has revealed so much meaning in all, that I can assure the Italian scholar he will still find much wealth of thought and beauty in those which I have not here given.

My valued friends Mr. John S. Dwight, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, Mr. F. B. Sanborn, and Miss Eva Channing have kindly consented to enrich my book with new translations. I feel deeply grateful to them for thus allowing me to entwine their rare flowers in my garland, and I expect the gratitude of my readers for calling forth these precious additions to our English translations.

I will say nothing of the difficulty of this task except to quote the words of Wordsworth, whose sonnets have become treasures of English literature.

“I mentioned Michelangelo’s poetry,” says Mr. Wordsworth in one of his letters, “to you some time ago; it is the most difficult to construe I ever met with, but just what you would expect from such a man, showing abundantly how conversant his soul was with great things. I can translate, and have translated, two books of Ariosto, at the rate nearly of one hundred lines a day; but so much meaning has been put by Michelangelo into so little room, and that meaning sometimes so excellent in itself, that I found the difficulty of translating him insurmountable. I attempted at least fifteen of the sonnets, but could not anywhere succeed. I have sent you the only one I was able to finish; it is far from being the best or most characteristic, but the others were too much for me.”

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INTRODUCTION.

MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI. Born March 6, 1474 ; died
February 18, 1564.

TO the triple crown of Sculptor, Painter, and Architect, to which Michelangelo's claim is undisputed, must be added that of Poet, which has been accorded to him by the finest critics of his own time and of ours ; yet to many readers of scholarship and taste his poems are still almost unknown. This neglect is partly due to the intrinsic difficulty in the poems themselves, which usually treat of lofty themes in condensed language, and partly to the fact that not until twenty-one years ago were his works properly edited and published in Italy. These poems contain such wealth of thought and feeling, touching upon the deepest questions of philosophy and the tenderest experiences of the human heart, that he who once tastes of their sweetness will never cease to thirst for this fountain of refreshment and strength. The epitaphs on Cecchino Bracci Fiorentino, for instance, may, on the first reading, seem quaint and formal, reiterating trite thoughts of death and immortality ; but a fuller acquaintance with them recognizes the expression of every form and thought of grief, and they lie in the memory as a treasure-house of sympathetic utterance which matches the changing phases of one's own experience.

Condivi, Michelangelo's personal friend, says: "He devoted himself to poetry rather for his own delight than because he made a profession of it, always depreciating himself and accusing his ignorance."

His poems were scribbled upon the backs of old letters, drawings, or other chance papers; sometimes copied and sent to his friends, but as often left unfinished and unknown. Yet the corrections and various readings of many of the sonnets show that he did give them much thought, and was careful in his choice of words and form. Although urged by his friends, he never consented to make any collection of his poems during his lifetime; yet in such esteem were they held that Varchi delivered a full commentary on the sonnet beginning "Non ha l'ottimo artista alcun concetto," before the Florentine Academy; analyzing it line by line, and bestowing upon it unbounded praise. But even more precious is the brief eulogium of Berni, "Others say words, but he speaks things," — which must have pleased him far more than the lavish adulation of the sycophant Aretino, who "wished to place every word of Michelangelo in an urn of emerald." Nor was popular recognition wholly wanting. Three, at least, of his madrigals were set to music by distinguished composers, and were favorites with the people, who had only lately found good melody married to anything but the hymns of the Church. But through all the sixteenth century only a few of his sonnets and madrigals were to be found. These were in a collection of verses in the Life of Michelangelo by Vasari, and in Varchi's lectures. Mario Giudicei gave two fine lectures upon the first edition of his works.

During the latter part of the eighteenth century the French taste then prevalent led the hearts of Italians

somewhat away from Dante and Michelangelo, and the poems of the latter did not escape sharp criticism.

Four years after Michelangelo's death, a son was born to his favorite nephew, Leonardo, and named for his great ancestor. Although ~~this~~^{V.} child became a well-known writer, the world honors him most for his devotion to the memory of the great artist. He built a noble gallery, which he adorned with collections of his uncle's works, and pictures of the scenes of his life. He also recognized the value of the poems, and for the first time collected the scattered leaves and carefully revised and edited them.

But, unfortunately, his care was not satisfied with ascertaining what Michelangelo really wrote, and giving it to the public; but he thought his duty required him to make his poems acceptable to a newer and more enlightened age. He therefore *reduced* the poems to the level of his own taste; filling up gaps in the verses, adding others, softening harsh expressions, and omitting many strong peculiarities. He seems to have feared their free expression in religion; and, as Guasti says, "he kept an eye on the fiscal auditor and the theologian of Santa Croce." This work, published in 1623, was the basis of all the editions and translations for more than two hundred years. Yet even in this garbled form the poems attracted the attention and won the hearts of scholars and lovers of poetry, so that several editions were published in Italy, and translations made in Latin, German, French, and English. In 1858 the Counsellor Cosimo Buonarroti, with patriotic generosity, gave to the city of Florence all the treasures received from his great ancestor, including many of the original manuscripts of the poems. Signor Guasti, having access to these remains, and also to other manuscripts

preserved in the Vatican, has prepared and published an edition of the poems which for clear arrangement of the text and for thoroughness and beauty of execution is eminently satisfactory. He has given every aid needed by a foreigner moderately acquainted with the Italian language to read intelligently these masterpieces of thought; while he has carefully preserved all the various readings of the originals, giving first the one to which he himself assigns the preference as probably the final form satisfactory to the poet himself.

The English translators, Wordsworth, Taylor, and Harford, did not have the inestimable benefit of his work, and yet they have enriched our language with noble versions of some of the poems. Since Guasti's work was completed, Mr. John Addington Symonds has published a full set of translations of the sonnets. His work is of the greatest value to English students. He is as faithful to the text as the exigencies of translation will permit, and has given the historical sonnets with great spirit and energy. His versions differ in merit, it may be, from the greater obscurity of the original, or from less sympathy on his part with the thought of the poem; and a harsh expression sometimes destroys the harmony of the poetic diction. It is often difficult to render a terse Italian expression into English without using a homely word which approaches to coarseness.

The modern reader misses in these poems the constant reference to Nature's outward works which forms so large a part of the poetry of our own time. ✓ Michelangelo seldom alludes to special appearances in Nature, and then only slightly, to illustrate an abstract thought; yet those argue superficially who believe him to have been insensible to natural beauty. The sonnets on Night show his

feeling for one of the most mysterious and exciting phases of Nature, and the thirty-eighth sonnet refers to the common beauties of fount and rill and wave with freshness of tender feeling. We cannot accept the judgment of even so accomplished a critic as Pater, that "the world of natural things has almost no existence for him." He wrote a long pastoral poem in which he celebrates the peace and happiness of a shepherd's life. It begins simply, and even playfully; but as he proceeds he quits this unfamiliar style for metaphysical speculation, and for a weird and powerful allegory, difficult to interpret. This poem recalls the style of Poliziano, as his madrigals and sonnets remind one sometimes of Petrarch, but more often of Dante.¹

The facts of Michelangelo's life may be so easily learned from the many biographies, that it is not necessary to repeat them here, except as they are alluded to in the poems. Few of his early writings remain, and it is not easy to assign the date of all his love poems. Probably many are lost; most of those which we possess were written after his sixtieth year, and given to various friends. Among these were Sebastian del Piombo, the well-known artist; Luigi del Riccio, of whom Michelangelo said that he had the spirit of poesy; Donato Giannotti,² whose criticisms he valued greatly; and Tommaso dei Cavalieri, a young man of talent and beauty. His friends were very anxious to obtain these gems of poetry, and often sent him some little present of fruit or game, which he playfully acknowledges in a note appended to a sonnet or madrigal. The greater part of his poems are referred by Pater to the period between 1542 and 1547,—the latter being the year of Vittoria Colonna's death,—or from his

¹ See Appendix, p. 161 (4).

² Ibid. p. 160 (2).

sixty-eighth to his seventy-third year. We have, however, the sonnet to Giorgio Vasari, dated 1554, and the lines to Cardinal Beccadelli, 1556, when he was eighty-two years old.

The personal relation of greatest importance in this connection is with his beautiful and truly noble friend Vittoria Colonna.¹ It is probable that Michelangelo first met this congenial spirit in 1536 or 1538. She was already a widow, whose poetic muse was employed in a constant tribute of love and grief to the memory of her husband. She was the idol of her own sex in Italy, who adored her as a saint and sought her counsels in doubt and distress. She was indeed admired by men of all classes; but she preserved the purity and modesty of her spirit, and was only prevented by the commands of the Pope from seeking the retirement of a cloister. The high themes of Patriotism, Philosophy, Art, and Religion engaged her thoughts, as they did those of Michelangelo; and on them they exchanged letters and poems, and he dedicated to her some of his noblest works in sculpture. He lived to mourn over her grave, and henceforth to find life robbed of its sweetest joy. The burden of old age and approaching death, with a deep sense of his own imperfections, lay heavy upon his heart, and found expression in those sonnets so full of deep struggle and suffering. Fully to understand them requires an intimate knowledge of the heart of man, as well as of the circumstances of the age and country which surrounded him.

It is common to speak of this relation as one of love, and expressions in the sonnets referring to his passion are taken literally. But to understand his words, we must remember the Platonic philosophy which filled his mind and gave color to all his thoughts. This high and dignified

¹ See Appendix, p. 159 (1).

friendship was undoubtedly made sweet and tender by the delicate reverence which every true man feels for woman ; but it was free from the folly of passion, which would have been alike unbecoming his high tone of thought and her unswerving devotion to her husband's memory. Such seems to have been the opinion of his contemporaries, who say "he was enamoured of the divine spirit of Vittoria Colonna."

In the early part of their acquaintance, he wrote to Tommaso dei Cavalieri some poems which are supposed to have covert reference to Vittoria. It is possible that he may thus have spoken to this friend before he dared to address her personally ; but the whole tone of their intercourse is frank, friendly, and thoughtful. Patriotism, Love, Art, and Religion are the themes of his verse, and in all of them he struggled with passionate longings and bitter regrets. The city of his birth was degraded and enslaved ; and in the visible Church, which he never forsook, he had been obliged to recognize the foe of his country. We know nothing of the outward history of his love ; but that he had felt the shock and recoil of passion, and that he had hungered and thirsted for affection, is but too evident. And yet there is no personal allusion or recognition of a want of the natural domestic ties dear to the heart : all is veiled in dim, solemn imagery which hides even while it reveals.¹

Michelangelo's philosophy, based upon Platonism, is pure idealism. Human life, all mortal forms, are but the outward expression of spiritual life. He never rests in the outward and material, but sees it only as now concealing, now revealing, the inward idea, —

"The more the marble wastes, the more the statue grows."

¹ See Appendix, p. 162 (5).

Death is a constant theme; but it is never a final end—always a step to higher life. He feels deep grief when it bears away his beloved ones, but he recognizes it as a sure friend which is to end all sorrows: "It could defend one from all other miseries, even those of love." This philosophy¹ was blended with his religious ideas, and the influences of the newly revived love of antiquity and of Christian teachings are both apparent in his poems. It is therefore possible to draw very varying inferences from his expressions in regard to his religious convictions. The more definite allusions to Christian theology in his later poems may be attributed to the influence of his friends Vittoria Colonna and the Cardinal Beccadelli; while the boldness and freedom of his thought in the poem on the death of his father recalls his early admiration for the prophet Savonarola.

That Michelangelo was truly an idealist in Art is evident: it is not the outward form, but the inward image, that he is ever seeking. The Beautiful is always an image of the Divine, and the only reason for loving it in outward form is that it brings us near to the eternal fountain of Love. So closely were Religion, Art, and Love blended in his thought that it is sometimes impossible to tell to which he refers in his poems. The remorse which often oppresses him for the false love which has deluded him is that keen sense of unworthiness which haunts every sensitive soul worshipping the ideal, and by no means implies any moral fault in his life. His contemporaries, especially Condivi, bear emphatic testimony to the temperance and purity of his thought, speech, and life. His love of poetry

¹ John Edward Taylor has given a full analysis of Michelangelo's philosophy in his admirable book "Michelangelo considered as a Philosophic Poet."

was fostered, if not awakened, by his early residence in Bologna with Aldovrandi, who delighted in his Tuscan accent, and often engaged him to read to him from Petrarch, Dante, and Boccaccio. How highly he revered the great poet of his country is shown by his noble sonnets to Dante, and by his illustrating the *Divina Commedia* with designs which — alas for us! — are forever lost.

But no biography gives us so intimate an acquaintance with the heart and life of this man as the poems, which were the delight, solace, and relief of his lonely days. The many different readings show that they were dear to him; and we can often trace his efforts to give the exact shade of thought which he longed to express. They prove how utterly superficial is the judgment which denies to him tenderness and piety, and the most intense longing for the love and communion of his fellow-beings; yet too often solitude and loneliness were his lot, — how keenly felt, is shown in these poetic revelations.

Life was very serious to him; and in an age so luxurious and frivolous, solitude seemed the only fitting companionship. And yet Donato Giannotti, who knew him well, makes him say, in his Dialogues: "Know that I am the man the most inclined to love persons that ever was born in any time. Whenever I see any one who has any virtue, or shows any quickness of mind, or can do or say anything more fittingly than others, I am constrained to fall in love with him; and I give myself up as a prey to him, so that I am no more my own, but all his."¹ Does not this explain many passages in his poems where he complains of the empire of love over him? His sympathies were so profound and intense that he felt obliged to hold himself

¹ See Appendix, p. 160 (2).

aloof from men, lest his own power of free creation should be lost.

Greatness and goodness are nearly allied ; the more closely we study the life of this artist, whose colossal intellect and stern will give him rank among the very highest names in history, the more do we find the purity and truth of his moral nature and the depth of his affections ; and we learn anew the great truth that intellectual development alone may make monsters, but only when heart and head work together can we have a true artist.

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF MICHELANGELO'S POEMS.

Life of Michelangelo. By RICCARDO DUPPA. First edition, London, 1806 ; second, London, 1807 ; third, London, 1816.

Michelangelo considered as a Philosophic Poet. With translations. By JOHN EDWARD TAYLOR. London, 1840 ; second edition, London, 1852.

The Life of M. A. Buonarroti, with translations of many of his poems and letters. Also memoirs of Savonarola, Raphael, and Vittoria Colonna. By JOHN S. HARFORD. London, 1857.

The Sonnets of Michelangelo Buonarroti and Tommaso Campanella. By JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS. London, 1878.

SELECTED POEMS.

EPIGRAMMI.

I.

SOPRA LA NOTTE DEL BUONARROTO. ✓

DI GIOVANNI STROZZI.

*LA NOTTE, che tu vedi in sì dolci atti
Dormir, fu da un Angelo scolpita
In questo sasso, e perchè dorme ha vita :
Destala, se nol credi, e parleratti.*

RISPOSTA DEL BUONARROTO.

CARO m'è 'l sonno, e più l'esser di sasso,
Mentre che 'l danno e la vergogna dura :
Non veder, non sentir, m'è gran ventura ;
Però non mi destar, deh ! parla basso.

EPIGRAMS.

I.

ON THE STATUE OF NIGHT.

BY GIOVANNI STROZZI.

*NIGHT ! whom you see in soft repose
An angel sculptured, yet life glows
Where sleep exists : speak thou ; for she,
Spite of thy doubts, will answer thee.*

HARFORD.

REPLY OF BUONARROTO.

'T IS sweet to sleep, still more of stone to be,
While sin and shame and injury remain :
To see not, hear not, is my greatest gain ;
So pray speak low, and do not waken me.

E. C.

IV.

CHI non vuol delle foglie,
Non ci venga di maggio.

V. ✓

AMORE è un concetto di bellezza
Immaginata, cui sta dentro al core,
Amica di virtute e gentilezza.

IV.

(On the front of a gate.)

WHO not leaves would bear away,
Must not come to us in May.

V.

LOVE is a conceit of Beauty:
He who bears it in his heart
Is the gentle friend of Duty.

E. D. C.

E P I T A F F I

PER

CECCHINO BRACCI FIORENTINO,

MORTO IN ROMA NEL DICIASSETTESIMO ANNO, L'VIII GENNAIO
MDXLIV.

MANDATI A LUIGI DEL RICCIO.

II.

DEH serbi, s' è di me pietate alcuna,
Che qui son chiuso e dal mondo disciolto,
Le lacrime a bagnarsi il petto e'l volto
Per chi resta suggetto alla fortuna.

IV.

NON volse morte non ancider senza
L'arme degli anni e de' superchi giorni
La beltà che qui giace, acciò c'or torni
Al ciel con la non persa sua presenza.

VII.

QUI son sepulto, e poco innanzi nato
Ero: e son quello al qual fu presta e cruda
La morte sì, che l'alma di me nuda
S'accorge a pena aver cangiato stato.

SELECTIONS FROM FORTY-EIGHT EPITAPHS

FOR

CECCHINO BRACCI FIORENTINO,

WHO DIED IN ROME IN HIS SEVENTEENTH YEAR, JAN. 8, 1544.

II.

AH ! keep your tears, if pity fills your eyes
For me, who here released from earth have place ;
Keep them to bathe the weary breast and face
Of him who subject low to earthly fortune lies.

IV.

DEATH wisned to strike, without the heavier blow
Of weary years or overweight of days,
The beauty that lies here, that seen in heavenly rays
We still his earthly countenance might know.

VII.

HERE am I buried, — I who, born but late,
Stern death hath sinitten with so quick a blow,
That scarcely doth my unclothed spirit know
That it hath changed its early heavenly state.

IX.

L' ALMA di dentro di fuor non vedea,
 Come noi, il volto chiuso in questo avello :
 Che se nel ciel non è albergo sì bello,
 Trarnela morte già ma' non potea.

XII.

QUI son morto creduto ; e per conforto
 Del mondo vissi, e con mille alme in seno
 Di veri amanti ; adunche, a venir meno,
 Per tormen' una sola non son morto.

XIV.

QUI vuol mie sorte c' anzi tempo i' dorma :
 Nè son già morto : e ben c' albergo cangi,
 Resto in te vivo, c' or mi vedi e piangi ;
 Se l' un nell' altro amante si trasforma.

XV.

SE qui cent' anni t' han tolto due ore,
 Un lustro è forza che l' eterno inganni ! —
 No, che 'n un giorno è vissuto cent' anni
 Colui che 'n quello il tutto impara, e muore.

XVI.

GRAN ventura qui morto esser mi veggio :
 Tal dota ebbi dal cielo anzi che veglio ;
 Chè, non possendo al mondo darmi meglio,
 Ogni altro che la morte era 'l mie peggio.

IX.

THE soul while in the body could not see,
Like us, the form enshrouded in this tomb ;
But if Heaven granteth not as fair a room,
Death had not gained the power to set it free.

XII.

THEY do believe me dead, — I who still shed
Delight on all the world, living in thousand souls
In breasts of lovers true. No death controls,
Taking one soul alone. I am not dead.

XIV.

HERE fate has willed me ere my time to sleep :
I am not dead, though changed my dwelling be ;
While thou dost look and weep, I rest alone in thee,
Since lovers each the other's image keep.

XV.

IF years to kill, the power in moments lies,
A lustre might eternal life betray !
Ah ! no ; he lives a hundred years in single day,
Who in that time learns everything, and dies.

XVI.

To lie here dead, I deem a blest estate ;
Such grace from Heaven I have, to grow not old :
The best of earthly gifts to me all told,
Aught else than death would give me harder fate.

XVIII.

SE fussin, perch' i' viva un' altra volta,
 Gli altr'u' pianti a quest' ossa carne e sangue;
 Sarie spietato per pietà chi langue,
 Per rilegar lor l'alma in ciel disciolta.

XX.

S' i' fu' già vivo, tu sol, pietra, il sai,
 Che qui mi serri: e s'alcun mi ricorda,
 Gli par sogniar: sì morte è presta e' ngorda,
 Che quel ch'è stato, non par fusse mai.

XXIII.

DE' Bracci naqqui; e dopo 'l primo pianto,
 Picciol tempo il sol vider gli occhi miei.
 Qui son per sempre; nè per men vorrei,
 S' i' resto vivo in quel che m'amò tanto.

XXXV.

A LA terra la terra, e l'alma al cielo
 Qui reso ha morte. A chi morto ancor m'ama
 Ha dato in guardia mie bellezza e fama,
 Ch' eterni in pietra il mie terrestre velo.

XLIII.

I' FU' Cecchin mortale, e or son divo:
 Poco ebbi 'l mondo, e per sempre il ciel godo.
 Di sì bel cambio e di morte mi lodo,
 Che molti morti, e me partorì vivo.

XVIII.

IF so it were, that life might be regained,
 Tears clothe these bones with living flesh and blood,
 Ah ! cruel would he be, who deemed it for my good
 To bind again my soul, in Heaven unchained.

XX.

THAT I once lived, thou stone alone dost ween,
 Who lock'st me here : if one remembers me,
 He seems to dream ; death grasps so greedily,
 That what has passed seems never to have been.

XXIII.

A BRACCI I was born, and after birth below
 But little time mine eyes might see the sun.
 Here am I now forever. Life is won,
 If I remain alive in him who loved me so.

XXXV.

DEATH has given earth to earth, to Heaven my soul.
 To him who loves me yet in death the same,
 Is given to guard my beauty and my fame ;
 This stone forever keeps my earthly whole.

XLIII.

I WAS Cecchino, now Divine I live :
 Short time the world I had, but Heaven now is mine.
 For such a fair exchange, to Death I praise assign,
 Who many dead, but me brought forth alive.

E. D. C.

MADRIGALI.

III.

A LUIGI DEL RICCIO.

NON sempre al mondo è sì pregiato e caro
Quel che molti contenta,
Che non sie 'lcun che senta,
Quel ch' è lor dolce, spesse volte amaro.
Il buon gusto è sì raro,
Ch' a forza al vulgo cede,
Allor che dentro di se stesso gode.
Ond' io, perdendo, imparo
Quel che di fuor non vede
Chi l' alma attrista e' suo' sospir non ode.
Il mondo è cieco, e di suo' gradi o lode
Più giova a chi più scarso esser ne suole :
Come sferza che 'nsegnia, e parte duole.

MADRIGALS.

III.

TO LUIGI DEL RICCIO.

ILL hath he chosen his part who seeks to please
The worthless world,— ill hath he chosen his part,
For often must he wear the look of ease

When grief is in his heart ;
And often in his hours of happier feeling
With sorrow must his countenance be hung,
And ever his own better thoughts concealing,
Must he in stupid Grandeur's praise be loud,
And to the errors of the ignorant crowd

Assent with lying tongue.

Thus much would I conceal that none should know
What secret cause I have for silent woe ;
And, taught by many a melancholy proof
That those whom Fortune favors it pollutes,
I, from the blind and faithless world aloof,
Nor fear its envy, nor desire its praise,
But choose my path through solitary ways.

SOUTHEY.

IV.

(SECONDA LEZIONE.)

PERCH' è troppo molesta,
Ancor che dolce sia,
Quella mercè che l' alma legar suole ;
Mie libertà di questa
Vostr' alta cortesia,
Più che d' un furto, si lamenta e duole.
E com' occhio nel sole
Disgrega suo virtù, ch' esser dovrebbe
Di maggior luce, s' a veder ne sprona ;
Così 'l desir non vuole
Zoppa la grazia in me, che da vo' crebbe.
Chè 'l poco al troppo spesso s' abbandona,
Nè questo a quel perdonà :
C' amor vuol sol gli amici (onde son rari)
Di fortuna e virtù simili e pari.

IV.

(SECOND READING.)

LADY, I trust it is not pride,
But obligations so allied
To favor that I seem to see
In your exalted courtesy
Infringement on my liberty.
Oh ! rather injure me, than bind
Such fetters on my free-born mind :
Since the sun's radiance on the eye
Shining in unblenched majesty,
Should heighten, not o'erwhelm, the sight,
But dazzles by excess of light,
On me thus acts your presence bright ;
It charms, and yet its potent ray
Unnerves my reason's wonted sway :
Small virtue, when its path is crost
By higher far, absorbed, is lost :
They who too much bestow confound ;
With such there is no common ground ;
Therefore (though rarely to be found)
Love wills that friends should equal be
In virtue and in quality.

HARFORD.

V.

A VITTORIA COLONNA,

MARCHESANA DI PESCARA.

ORA in sul destro, ora in sul manco piede
Variando, cerco della mia salute :
Fra 'l vizio e la virtute
Il cor confuso mi travaglia e stanca ;
Come chi 'l ciel non vede,
Che per ogni sentier si perde, e manca.
Porgo la carta bianca
A' vostri sacri inchiostri,
Ch' amor mi sganni, e pietà 'l ver ne scriva :
Che l' alma da sè franca
Non pieghi a gli error nostri
Mio breve resto, e che men cieco viva.
Chieggio a voi, alta e diva
Donna, saper se 'n ciel men grado tiene
L' umil peccato che 'l superchio bene.

V.

TO VITTORIA COLONNA,

MARCHIONESS OF PESCARA.

MIDST endless doubts, shifting from right to left,
How my salvation to secure I seek,
And still 'twixt vice and virtue balancing,
My heart confused weighs down and wearies me,—
As one who, having lost the light of Heaven,
Bewildered strays, whatever path he takes ;
I, Lady, to your sacred penmanship
Present the blank page of my troubled mind,
That you, in dissipation of my doubts,
May on it write how my benighted soul
Of its desired end may not so fail
As to incur at length a fatal fall :
Be you the writer who have taught me how
To tread by fairest paths the way to Heaven.

HARFORD.

VI.

IN MORTE DI VITTORIA COLONNA.

[1547.]

PER non s' avere a ripigliar da tanti
Quell' insieme beltà, che più non era,
In donna alta e sincera
Prestata fu sott' un candido velo :
Ch' a risquoter da quanti
Al mondo son, mal si rimborsa il cielo.
Ora in un breve anelo,
Anzi in un punto, Dio
Dal mondo poco accorto
Se l' ha ripresa, e tolta agli occhi nostri.
Nè metter può in oblìo,
Benchè 'l corpo sia morto,
I suo' dolci leggiadri e sacri inchiostri.
Crudel pietà, qui mostri,
Se quanto a questa, il ciel prestava a i brutti,
S' or per morte il rivuol, morremo or tutti.

VI.

ON THE DEATH OF VITTORIA COLONNA.

[1547.]

PURE and unsullied beauty Heaven lent
Unto one noble, lofty fair alone,
Beneath a spotless veil, that when through death
Reclaimed, it should not have to leave so many.
If Heaven indeed had shared it among all
That mortal are, it scarce could have withdrawn
It back, and re-enriched its treasury.
Heaven has reta'en it from this mortal goddess
(To call her so), and borne it from our eyes;
Yet the sweet, beautiful, and holy verse
Cannot so soon into oblivion pass,
Although the mortal be removed by death.
But Pity, merciless, appears to us
To show that if to each one Heaven had given
The beauty of this fair one to partake,
We should be all obliged to suffer death,
That Heaven might repossess it of its own.

TAYLOR.

VII.

PER fido esempio alla mia vocazione
Nel parto mi fu data la bellezza,
Che d' ambo l' arti m' è lucerna e specchio.
S' altro si pensa, è falsa opinione.
Questo sol l' occhio porta a quella altezza
Ch' a pingere e scolpir qui m' apparecchio.
affarsar
S' e giudizii temerari e sciocchi
Al senso tiran la beltà, che muove
E porta al cielo ogni intelletto sano;
Dal mortale al divin non vanno gli occhi
Infermi, e fermi sempre pur là dove
Ascender senza grazia è pensier vano.

VII.

To bind me faithful to my calling high,
By birth was given me beauty's light,
Lantern and mirror of two noble arts ;
And other faith is but a falsity.
This bears the soul alone to its proud height ;
To paint, to sculpture, this all strength imparts.
And other judgments foolish are and blind,
Which draw from sense the beauty that can move,
And bear to heaven each heart with wisdom sane.
No road divine our eyes infirm may find ;
The mortal may not from that world remove
Whence without grace to hope to rise is vain.

E. D. C.

VIII.

GLI occhi miei vaghi delle cose belle,
E l' alma insieme della sua salute,
Non hanno altra virtute
Ch' ascenda al ciel, che mirar tutte quelle.
Dalle più alte stelle
Discende uno splendore,
Che 'l desir tira a quelle ;
E qui si chiama amore.
Nè altro ha gentil core,
Che l' innamori e arda, e che 'l consigli,
Ch' un volto che ne gli occhi lor somigli.

VIII.

My eyes, which love to gaze on beauteous things,
Act on my soul, which pants for heavenly light,
Until I almost seem endued with wings,
'Neath Beauty's smile, for a supernal flight.
From loftiest stars shoots down a radiance all their own,
 Drawing the soul above ;
 And such we say is Love.
 For nought can so control,
 Charm, penetrate the soul,
Or counsel it in monitory guise,
As a sweet face set off by starlit eyes.

HARFORD.

XII.

Sì come per levar, donna, si pone
In pietra alpestra e dura
Una viva figura,
Che là più crescie u' più la pietra scema;
Tal alcun' opre buone,
Per l' alma che pur trema,
Cela il superchio della propria carne
Co l' inculta sua cruda e dura scorza.
Tu pur dalle mie streme
Parti puo' sol levarne;
Ch' in me non è di me voler nè forza.

XII.

As, Lady, when we hew away
The rugged outer stone,
A living form is shown,
Which, as the marble wastes, grows more defined;
So does our fleshly hull of clay,
That harsh and rude and savage rind,
Conceal the impulses of right
Of the weak soul, which trembles still.
Thou only canst unbind
This veil which hides my inner light;
For I alone have neither strength nor will.

E. C.

XV.

BEATI, voi che su nel ciel godete
Le lacrime che 'l mondo non ristora,
Favvi amor guerra ancora,
O pur per morte liberi ne siete ?
La nostra eterna quiete,
Fuor d' ogni tempo, è priva
D' invidia amando, e d' angosciosi pianti.
Dunque a mal pro ch' i' viva
Convien, come vedete,
Per amare e servire in dolor tanti.
Se 'l cielo è degli amanti
Amico, e 'l mondo ingrato
Amando, a che son nato ?
A viver molto ? E questo mi spaventa :
Chè 'l poco è troppo a chi ben serve e stenta.

XV.

OH ! blessed ye who find in Heaven the joy,
The recompense of tears, earth cannot yield !
Tell me, has Love still power over you,
Or are ye freed by death from his constraint ?
Th' eternal rest to which we shall return
When time has ceased to be, is a pure love,
Deprived of envy, loosed from sorrowing.
Then is my greatest burden still to live,
If whilst I love such sorrows must be mine.
If Heaven 's indeed the friend of those who love,
The world their cruel and ungrateful foe,
Oh ! wherefore was I born with such a love ?
To live long years ? 'T is this appalleth me :
Few are too long for him who serveth well.

TAYLOR.

XVIII.

S' EGLI è che 'l buon desio
Porti dal mondo a Dio
Alcuna cosa bella,
Sol la mie donna è quella,
A chi ha gli occhi fatti com' ho io.
Ogni altra cosa oblio,
E sol di tant' ho cura.
Non è gran maraviglia,
S' io l' amo e bramo e chiamo a tutte l' ore:
N' è proprio valor mio,
Se l' alma per natura
S' appoggia a chi somiglia
Ne gli occhi gli occhi, ond' ella scende fore;
Se sente il primo Amore
Come suo fin, per quel qua questa onora:
Ch' amar diè 'l servo ch' el signore adora.

XVIII.²

If it be true that any beauteous thing
Raises the pure and just desire of man
From earth to God, the eternal fount of all,
Such I believe my love ; for as in her
So fair, in whom I all besides forget,
I view the gentle work of her Creator,
I have no care for any other thing
Whilst thus I love. Nor is it marvellous,
Since the effect is not of my own power,
If the soul doth by nature, tempted forth,
Enamoured through the eyes,
Repose upon the eyes, which it resembleth,
And through them riseth to the primal love,
As to its end, and honors in admiring ;
For who adores the Maker needs must love his work.

TAYLOR.

XXII.

DA maggior luce e da più chiara stella
La notte il ciel le sue da lunge accende :
Te sol, presso a te, rende
Ogni or più bella ogni cosa men bella.
Qual cor più questa o quella
A pietà muove e sprona,
C' ogni or ch' i' ardo, almen non s' aggiacc' egli ?
Chi, senza aver, ti dona
Vaga e gentil persona
E 'l volto e gli occhi e' biondi e be' capegli ;
Dunche contra te quegli
Ben fuggi, e me con essi ;
Se 'l bello infra' non begli
Beltà cresce a se stessi.
Donna, ma stu rendessi
Quel che t' ha dato il ciel, c' a noi l' ha tolto,
Sarie più 'l nostro, e men bello il tuo volto.

XXII.

By greater light and clearer star
Night's heaven is lighted from afar ;
But things less fair, when near to thee,
Make thee more fair than thou wouldest be.
Oh, tell me, lady, which of these
 To pity moves and spurs,
That when I burn, you may not freeze ?
Who thus gains beauty more than hers—
 A fair and lovely form,
A face and eyes and flowing hair, —
Would only her own charms deform
 By shunning one less fair ;
For beauty but more lovely grows
 Where others beauty lack.
O lady, if what Heaven bestows
 To us thou render back,
What Heaven from us has ta'en and given to thee,
Fairer our face, and thine less fair would be.

E. D. C.

XXIII.

DEH ! dimmi, amor, se l' alma di costei
Fosse pietosa com' ha bell' il volto,
S' alcun saria sì stolto
Ch' a sè non si togliessi e dessi a lei ?
Et io che più potrei
Servirla, amarla, se mi foss' amica ;
Che, sendomi nemica,
L' amo più ch' allor far non doverrei ?

XXIII.

If pity filled her soul, O Cupid, say,
As much as beauty glorifies her face,
Could any man be so bereft of grace
As not to yield himself to her dear sway?
And e'en if she were friendly, tell me, how
Could I her truer slave and lover be,
Since, notwithstanding her hostility,
Far more than then I ought, I love her now?

E. C.

XXIV.

Com' arò dunque ardire
Senza vo' ma', mio ben, tenermi 'n vita,
S' io non posso al partir chiedervi aita ?
Que' singulti, e que' pianti, e que' sospiri
Che 'l miser core voi accompagnorno,
Madonna, duramente dimostrorno
La mia propinqua morte e' miei martiri.
Ma se ver è che per assenzia mai
Mia fedel servitù vadia in obbligo,
Il cor lasso con voi, che non è mio.

XXIV.

How shall I e'er have power,
Taken from you, to keep myself in life,
Unable if at parting to invoke
Your aid ? These plaints, these sorrowings, these sighs,
With which my grieving heart still follows you,
With cruel indication, lady, show
My near approaching death, my sufferings.
But lest by absence you forgetful prove
How I have served you with all faithfulness,
As a remembrance of my long-borne woes,
I leave to you my heart, which is not mine.

TAYLOR.

XXV.

COME può esser ch' io non sia più mio ?
O dio, o dio, o dio !
Chi mi tolse a me stesso,
Ch' a me fusse più presso,
O più di me, che mi possa esser io ?
O dio, o dio, o dio !
Come mi passa 'l core
Chi non par che mi tocchi !
Che cosa è questa, amore,
Ch' al core entra per gli occhi ;
E s' avvien che trabocchi
Per poco spazio, dentro par che cresca ?

XXV)

How is it that I seem no longer mine ?

Some power there seems to be,

Which moulds my will by means I can't divine ;

My heart what flutterings move,

Touched in some viewless guise ; —

What is this thing called Love,

Which, entering by the eyes,

Pervades the inmost soul,

Where, spurning all control,

It claims resistless sway,

While countless outward acts its inward power display ?

HARFORD.

XXXIX.

QUESTA mia donna è sì pronta et ardita,
Ch' all' or che la m' uccide, ogni mio bene
Con gli occhi mi promette, e parte tiene
Il crudel ferro dentro alla ferita.

E così morte e vita,
Contrarie, insieme in un picciol momento
Dentro all' anima sento :
Ma la grazia el tormento
Minacci' a morte per più lunga prova ,
Ch' assai più nuoce il mal, che 'l ben non giova.

XXXIX.

Ev'N when she slays me, my loved Fair
Delights to act a double part ;
Her eyes speak promise, whilst her air
And mien strike daggers through my heart.

Thus death and life,
In dubious strife
And Joy and Pain,
Within me reign :

Soon will the conflict close, and Death's cold sway
Quench in the shades of night Joy's flattering ray.

HARFORD.

XLIV.

Occhi mie', siete certi
Che 'l tempo passa, e l' ora s' avicina
C' alle lacrime triste il passo serra.
Pietà vi tenga aperti,
Mentre la mie divina
Donna si degnia d' abitare in terra.
Se grazia il ciel diserra,
Com' a' beati suole ;
Questo mie vivo sole
Se lassù torna, e partesi da noi,
Che cosa arete qua da veder poi ?

XLIV.

MINE eyes, be certain quite
That time is passing, and the hour draws nigh
Which checks the course of every tear and sigh.

May pity keep your sight,
The while my fair divinity
Doth deign to walk the earth's broad face.
If Heaven is unbarred through grace,
As for the blest is often done;
If this my living sun,
Returning upward, shall depart from me,—
What will ye then, O eyes, have left to see?

E. C.

LIII.

Chi è quel che per forza a te mi mena,
Ohimè ohimè ohimè !
Legato e stretto, e son libero e sciolto ?
Se tu 'ncateni altrui senza catena,
E senza mani o braccia m' hai raccolto,
Chi mi difenderà dal tuo bel volto ?

LIII.

WHAT is the power which, though I'm free,
Draws me, in fetters bound, to thee,
Sweet source of all my joy and pain ?
If to enchain without a chain,
If round my yielding heart to twine
Soft bands invisible, be thine,
What shall defend me from the grace,
The winning beauties of the face ?

[*What from the living splendor of thine eyes,
When Love embattled points his arrowy sorceries ?*]

HARFORD.

Leter

LXXVIII.

CONDOTTO da molt' anni all' ultim' ore,
Tardi conosco, o mondo, i tuo' diletti :
/ La pace, che non hai, altrui prometti,
E quel riposo c' anzi al nascer muore.
La vergognia e 'l timore
De gli anni, c' or prescrive
Il ciel, non mi riuova
Che 'l vecchio e dolce errore ;
Nel qual chi troppo vive
L' anim' ancide, e nulla al corpo giova.
Il dico, e so per pruova
Di me; chè 'n ciel quel solo ha miglior sorte,
Ch' ebbe al suo parto più presso la morte.

LXXVIII.

CONDUCTED by long years to the last hours,
Too late, O world, I learn thy emptiness ;
Proffering to man the quiet thou hast not,
And that repose which dieth in its birth.
But not on that account reproach nor grief
For all my fugitive and ill-spent years
Renews desires and thoughts within my heart ;
For he who in sweet error groweth old,
Whilst he appears to quicken his desire,
Doth kill the soul, — the body profits not.
At length I see, by sad experience,
That he enjoys a better, surer lot
Who at his birth is nearest unto death.

TAYLOR.

LXXIX.

MENTRE che 'l mie passato m' è presente,
Si come ogni or mi viene,
O mondo falso, allor conosco bene
L' errore, e 'l danno dell' umana gente.
Quel cor, c' alfin consente
A tuo' lusingi e a tuo' van diletti,
Procaccia all' alma dolorosi guai :
Ben lo sa chi lo sente ;
Come spesso prometti
Altrui la pace e 'l ben che tu non hai,
Nè debbi aver già mai.
Dunche ha men grazia chi più qua soggiorna ;
Chè chi men vive, più lieve al ciel torna.

LXXIX.

WHEN thoughts of days long past upon me steal,
In vain I shun them ; all their forms arise :
Then, O fallacious world, I deeply feel
How steeped in error man besotted lies.

The heart which yields its faith to thee,
Charmed by thy magic sorcery,
And thoughtless thrids the giddy round
Of vain delights within thee found,
By the sad issue learns to know
That Pleasure is the nurse of Woe.
He who is wise, at length will cease
To trust thy promises of peace ;
Convinced thou never canst bestow
The good it is not thine to know.

The troubles I have proved, the griefs which dim my eyes,
Have sprung from yielding faith to thy vain fallacies.

HARFORD.

LXXXII.

Donn', a me vecchio e grave,
Ov' io torno e rientro
Sì come a peso il centro,
Che fuor di quel riposo alcun non ave,
Il ciel porgie le chiave.
Amor le volgie e gira,
E apre a' iusti il petto di costei :
Le voglie inique e prave
Mi vieta, e là mi tira,
Già stanco e vil, fra' rari e semidei.
Grazie vengon da lei
Strane e dolce e d' un certo valore,
Che per sè vive chiunque per le' muore.

LXXXII

LADY, to me infirm and old,
Where I return and enter,
As to the weight, the centre
Which, thence removed, no stable rest can hold,
Kind Heaven the keys doth proffer,
Which Love should fit and turn,
And thus to me doth offer
That inner joy for which pure spirits yearn.
Each sinful wish forbidding,
He draws me, with sweet leading,
Weary and low, to comrades half divine;
While every grace of thine
Is strange and sweet, and of undoubted worth.
Who dies for thee has to new living birth.

J. W. H.

LXXXIII.

OR d' un fier diaccio or d' un ardente foco,
Or d' anni o guai or di vergogna armato,
L' avvenir nel passato
Specchio, con trista e dolorosa speme ;
E 'l ben, per durar poco,
Sento non men che 'l mal m' afflige e preme.
Alla buona alla ria fortuna insieme,
Di me già stanche, ognor chieggio perdono :
E veggio ben, che della vita sono
Ventura e grazia l' ore breve e corte,
Se la miseria medica la morte.

LXXXIII.

Now in a frost, now in a burning flame,
Weighted with many years of woe and shame,
The future in the past I see,
Yet with no hope that comforts me,
Since welfare, by its term so brief,
Loads and oppresses me like grief.
Alike in good or evil fate,
My weary self asks pardon late ;
And I see well that life's short hours
Are blessings from the gracious powers,
If death can medicine my woful state.

E. D. C.

XCIII.

AMOR, se tu se' dio,
Non puo' ciò che tu vuoi ?
Deh fa' per me, se puoi,
Quel ch' io farei per te, s' amor fuss' io !
Sconviensi al gran desio
D' alta beltà la speme,
Viepiù l' effetto, a chi è presso al morire.
Pon nel tuo grado il mio :
Dolce gli fie chi 'l preme ?
Chè grazia per poc' or, doppia 'l martire.
Ben ti voglio ancor dire :
Che sarie morte, s' a' miseri è dura,
A chi muor giunto all' alta sua ventura ?

XCIII.

IF thou 'rt a god, Love,
Is not thy power free ?

Ah ! do for me, if thou canst, Love,
What if I were Love, I 'd do for thee !

'T is only with ill grace
One woos a beauty rare,

When weighed with years, and on the eve of dying.
A moment take my place :

Is that which burdens, fair ?

A transient grace is torment doubly trying.
And this, too, mid our sighing :

What would death be, which e'en the wretched shun,
To him who dies when highest bliss is won ?

E. C.

SONETTI.

I.

PER DANTE ALIGHIERI.

[1545.]

DAL ciel discese, e col mortal suo, poi
Che visto ebbe l' inferno giusto e 'l pio,
Ritornò vivo a contemplare Dio,
Per dar di tutto il vero lume a noi:
Lucente stella, che co' raggi suoi
Fe chiaro, a torto, el nido ove naqq' io;
Nè sare' l' premio tutto 'l mondo rio:
Tu sol, che la creasti, esser quel puoi.
Di Dante dico, che mal conosciute
Fur l' opre suo da quel popolo ingrato,
Che solo a' iusti manca di salute.
Fuss' io pur lui! c' a tal fortuna nato,
Per l' aspro esilio suo, con la virtute,
Dare' del mondo il più felice stato.

SONNETS.

I.

TO DANTE.

[1545.]

FROM Heaven he came, a mortal then ;
And Hell's just path and Mercy's highway trod,
Living, returned to look upon his God,
And give his holy light to us again :
A shining star, that with its brilliant rays
Illumed in evil times the nest where I was born.
As guerdon fit for him, this wicked earth I scorn :
God, his creator, him alone repays.
I speak of Dante ; for, alas ! ill known
His labors are, by that foul mob ingrate,
Whose honors fail but to the just alone.
Would I were he ! for, born to such a fate,
His bitter exile, and his courage shown,
I would not change for Earth's most happy state.

E. D. C.

II.

PER IL MEDESIMO.

QUANTE dirne si de' non si può dire,
Chè troppo agli orbi il suo splendor s' accese :
Biasmar si può più 'l popol che l' offese,
C' al suo men pregio ogni maggior salire.
Questo discese a' merti del fallire,
Per l' util nostro, e poi a Dio ascese :
E le porte che 'l ciel non gli contese,
La patria chiuse al suo giusto desire.
Ingrata, dico, e della suo fortuna
A suo danno nutrice ; ond' è ben segnio,
C' a' più perfetti abonda di più guai.
Fra mille altre ragion sol ha quest' una :
Se par non ebbe il suo esilio indegnio,
Simil uom nè maggior non naqque mai.

II.

TO DANTE.

WHAT should be said of him, I may not speak ;
His splendor overwhelms my blinded sight.
To censure those who wronged him is my right,
Since for his least worth my language is too weak.
He bended low where God doth punish sin,
To teach us ; then to God did he ascend.
'Gainst him the gates of heaven would not defend ;
Yet his false country would not welcome him.
Ungrateful country ! of thy children's fate,
Nurse to thine harm, bear witness this,—
 To thy most perfect, comes thy greatest shame.
So, from a thousand proofs, this one I state,—
 No equal exile hath there been to his :
 No greater man than he on earth e'er came.

E. D. C.

IV.

QUA si fa elmi di calici e spade,
E 'l sangue di Cristo si vend' a giumelle,
E croce e spine son lance e rotelle ;
E pur da Cristo pazienza cade !
Ma non c' arivi più 'n queste contrade,
Chè n' andre' 'l sangue suo 'nsin alle stelle,
Poscia che a Roma gli vendon la pelle ;
E èci d' ogni ben chiuso le strade.
S' i' ebbi ma' voglia a posseder tesauro,
Per ciò che qua opra da me è partita,
Può quel nel manto che Medusa in Mauro.
Ma se alto in cielo è povertà gradita,
Qual fia di nostro stato il gran restauro,
S' un altro segno amorza l' altra vita ?

IV.

HERE helms and swords are made of chalices :
The blood of Christ is sold so much the quart :
His cross and thorns are spears and shields ; and short
Must be the time e'er even his patience cease.
Nay, let him come no more to raise the fees
Of this foul sacrilege beyond report !
For Rome still flays and sells him at the court,
Where paths are closed to virtue's fair increase.
Now were fit time for me to scrape a treasure !
Seeing that work and gain are gone ; while he
Who wears the robe, is my Medusa still.
God welcomes poverty perchance with pleasure :
But of that better life what hope have we,
When the blessed banner leads to nought but ill ?

SYMONDS.

V.

A GIOVANNI DA PISTOIA,

QUANDO L' AUTORE DIPIGNEVA LA VOLTA DELLA SISTINA.

[1509.]

I' ho già fatto un gozzo in questo stento,
 Come fa l' acqua a' gatti in Lombardia,
 O ver d' altro paese che si sia,
 Ch' a forza 'l ventre appicca sotto 'l mento.

La barba al cielo, e la memoria sento
 In sullo scrignio, e 'l petto fo d' arpia ;
 E 'l pennel sopra 'l viso tuttavia
 Mel fa, gocciando, un ricco pavimento.
 E lombi entrati mi son nella peccia,
 E fo del cul per contrapeso groppa,
 E' passi senza gli occhi muovo invano.
 Dinanzi mi s' allunga la corteccia,
 E per piegarsi adietro si ragroppa,
 E tendomi com' arco soriano.

Però fallace e strano

Surgie il iudizio che la mente porta ;
 Chè mal si tra' per cerbottana torta.

La mia pittura morta

Difendi orma', Giovanni, e 'l mio onore,
 Non sendo in loco bon, nè io pittore.

V.

TO GIOVANNI DA PISTOJA,

WHILE THE AUTHOR WAS PAINTING THE SISTINE CHAPEL.

[1509.]

I 'VE grown a goitre by dwelling in this den —
As cats from stagnant streams in Lombardy,
Or in what other land they hap to be —
Which drives the belly close beneath the chin :
My beard turns up to heaven ; my nape falls in,
Fixed on my spine : my breast-bone visibly
Grows like a harp : a rich embroidery
Bedews my face from brush-drops thick and thin.
My loins into my paunch like levers grind :
My buttock like a crupper bears my weight ;
My feet unguided wander to and fro ;
In front my skin grows loose and long ; behind,
By bending it becomes more taut and strait ;
Crosswise I strain me like a Syrian bow :
Whence false and quaint, I know,
Must be the fruit of squinting brain and eye ;
For ill can aim the gun that bends awry.
Come then, Giovanni, try
To succour my dead pictures and my fame ;
Since foul I fare and painting is my shame.

SYMONDS.

XII.

A VITTORIA COLONNA.

FELICE spirto, che con zelo ardente,
Vecchio alla morte, in vita il mio cor tieni,
E fra mill' altri tuo' diletti e beni
Me sol saluti fra più nobil gente ;
Come mi fusti agli occhi, or alla mente,
Per l' altru' fiate, a consolar mi vieni :
Onde la speme il duol par che raffreni,
Che non men che 'l disio l' anima sente.
Dunque trovando in te chi per me parla,
Grazia di te per me fra tante cure,
Tal grazia ne ringrazia chi ti scrive.
Che sconcia e grand' usur saria a farla,
Donandoti turpissime pitture
Per riaver persone belle e vive.

XII.

TO VITTORIA COLONNA.

BLEST spirit, who with loving tenderness
Quickenest my heart so old and near to die,
Who mid thy joys on me dost bend an eye
Though many nobler men around thee press !
As thou wert erewhile wont my sight to bless,
So to console my mind thou now dost fly ;
Hope therefore stills the pangs of memory,
Which coupled with desire my soul distress.
So finding in thee grace to plead for me —
Thy thoughts for me sunk in so sad a case —
He who now writes, returns thee thanks for these.
Lo, it were foul and monstrous usury
To send thee ugliest paintings in the place
Of thy fair spirit's living phantasies.

SYMONDS.

XIII.

A VITTORIA COLONNA.

PER esser manco almen, signiora, indegnio
Dell' immensa vostr' alta cortesia,
Prima, all' incontro a quella, usar la mia
Con tutto il cor volse 'l mie basso ingegnio.
Ma visto poi c' ascendere a quel segnio
Proprio valor non è c' apra la via,
Perdon domanda la mie colpa ria,
E del fallir più saggio ognior divegnio.
E veggio ben com' erra, s' alcun crede
La grazia, che da voi divina piove,
Pareggi l' opera mia caduca e frale.
L' ingegnio e l' arte e la memoria cede :
C' un don celeste mai con mille pruove
Pagar può sol del suo chi è mortale.

XIII.

TO VITTORIA COLONNA.

OH, noble lady, but more true to be
To the high gift of your great courtesy,
I gladly would increasing merit find
In the poor efforts of my lowly mind !
But when unto this lofty height I climb,
The strength and worth to reach it are not mine.
My wicked boldness asks for saving grace,
That wisdom may some good from failure trace.

He errs, if any lets that foolish thought prevail,
That to the grace divine, flowing from you to me,
My frail and dying work can ever equal be :

My mind and art and memory all would fail.
How can a mortal, with a thousand efforts, pay
Celestial gifts, in his poor feeble way ?

E. D. C.

XIV.

A VITTORIA COLONNA.

[1550.]

DA che concetto ha l' arte intera e diva
La forma e gli atti d' alcun, poi di quello
D' umil materia un semplice modello
È 'l primo parto che da quel deriva.
Ma nel secondo poi di pietra viva
S' adempion le promesse del martello;
E sì rinascet tal concetto e bello,
Che ma' non è chi suo eterno prescriva.
Simil, di me model, nacqu' io da prima ;
Di me model, per cosa più perfetta
Da voi rinascer poi, donna alta e degna.
Se 'l poco accresce, 'l mio superchio lima
Vostra pietà ; qual penitenzia aspetta
Mio fiero ardor, se mi gastiga e insegnà ?

XIV.

TO VITTORIA COLONNA.

[1550.]

WHEN divine Art conceives a form and face,
She bids the craftsman for his first essay
To shape a simple model in mere clay :
This is the earliest birth of Art's embrace.
From the live marble in the second place
His mallet brings into the light of day
A thing so beautiful that who can say
When time shall conquer that immortal grace ?
Thus my own model I was born to be —
The model of that nobler self, whereto
Schooled by your pity, lady, I shall grow.
Each overplus and each deficiency
You will make good. What penance then is due
For my fierce heat, chastened and taught by you ?

SYMONDS.

XV.

NON ha l' ottimo artista alcun concetto,
Ch' un marmo solo in sè non circonscriva
Col suo soverchio ; e solo a quello arriva
La man che ubbidisce all' intelletto.

Il mal ch' io fuggo, e 'l ben ch' io mi prometto,
In te, donna leggiadra, altera e diva,
Tal si nasconde ; e perch' io più non viva,
Contraria ho l' arte al disiato effetto.

Amor dunque non ha, nè tua beltate,
O durezza, o fortuna, o gran disdegno,
Del mio mal colpa, o mio destino o sorte ;
Se dentro del tuo cor morte e pietate
Porti in un tempo, e che 'l mio basso ingegno
Non sappia, ardendo, trarne altro che morte.

XV.¹

WHATE'ER conception a great artist fires,
Its answering semblance latent lies within
A block of marble ; but the hand alone,
Swayed by the intellect, can give it form.
Lady illustrious, graceful, and divine,
The Good I 'd seek for, and the Ill I 'd shun,
Thus latent are in thee ; but I, death-struck,
Fail in my efforts to attain that Good.
Nor love, then, nor thy beauty are the cause,
Nor adverse fortune, nor thy cold disdain,
Of the sad destiny 'neath which I pine.
If death and pity each within thy heart
Together dwell, how weak my power, which fails,
Though ardent, to extract thence aught but death.

HARFORD.

¹ See Appendix, p. 162 (6).

XVII.

Com' esser, donna, può quel ch' alcun vede
Per lunga sperienza, che più dura
L' immagin viva in pietra alpestra e dura,
Che 'l suo fattor, che gli anni in cener riede ?
La causa all' effetto inclina e cede,
Onde dall' arte è vinta la natura.
Io 'l so, che 'l provo in la bella scultura ;
Ch' all' opra il tempo e morte non tien fede.
Dunque posso ambo noi dar lunga vita
In qual sie modo, o di colore o sasso,
Di noi sembrando l' uno e l' altro volto :
Sì che mill' anni dopo la partita
Quanto e voi bella fusti, e quant' io lasso
Si veggia, e com' amarvi io non fui stolto.

XVII.

How, lady, can it be — which yet is shown
By long experience — that the imaged form
Lives in the mountain stone, and long survives
Its maker, whom the dart of Death soon strikes ?
The frailer cause doth yield to the effect,
And nature is in this by art surpassed.
I know it well, whom Sculpture so befriends,
Whilst evermore Time breaketh faith with me.
Perchance to both of us I may impart
A lasting life in colors or in stone,
By copying the mind and face of each ;
So that for ages after my decease
The world may see how beautiful thou wert, —
How much I loved thee, nor in loving erred.

TAYLOR.

✓

XX.

QUANTO si gode, lieta e ben contesta
Di fior, sopra' crin d' or d' una, grillanda ;
Che l' altro inanzi l' uno all' altro manda,
Come ch' il primo sia a baciare la testa !
Contenta è tutto il giorno quella vesta
Che serra 'l petto, e poi par che si spanda ;
E quel c' oro filato si domanda
Le guanci' e 'l collo di toccar non resta.
Ma più lieto quel nastro par che goda,
Dorato in punta, con sì fatte tempre,
Che preme e tocca il petto ch' egli allaccia.
E la schietta cintura che s' annoda
Mi par dir seco : qui vo' stringier sempre !
Or che farebon dunche le mie braccia ?

XX.

WHAT joy hath yon glad wreath of flowers that is
 Around her golden hair so deftly twined,
 Each blossom pressing forward from behind,
As though to be the first her brows to kiss !
The livelong day her dress hath perfect bliss,
 That now reveals her breast, now seems to bind :
 And that fair woven net of gold refined
Rests on her cheek and throat in happiness !
Yet still more blissful seems to me the band
 Gilt at the tips, so sweetly doth it ring
 And clasp the bosom that it serves to lace :
Yea, and the belt, to such as understand,
 Bound round her waist, saith: here I'd ever cling.
 What would my arms do in that girdle's place ?

SYMONDS.

XXI.

D' ALTRUI pietoso e sol di sè spietato
Nascie un vil bruto, che con dolce doglia
L' altrui man veste, e la suo scorza spoglia,
E sol per morte si può dir ben nato.
Così volesse al mie signior mie fatto
Vestir suo viva di mie morta spoglia ;
Che, come serpe al sasso si discoglia,
Pur per morte potria cangiar mie stato.
O fussi sol la mie l' irsuta pelle
Che, del suo pel contesta, fa tal gonna
Che con ventura stringe sì bel seno,
Che 'l giorno pur m' arresti ; o le pianelle
Fuss' io, che basa a quel fanno ~~je~~ colonna,
C' al piover t' are' pure addosso almeno.

XXI

KIND to the world, but to itself unkind,
A worm is born that dying noiselessly
Despoils itself to clothe fair limbs, and be
In its true worth by death alone divined.
Oh, would that I might die, for her to find
Raiment in my outworn mortality !
That, changing like the snake, I might be free
To cast the slough wherein I dwell confined !
Nay, were it mine, that shaggy fleece that stays,
Woven and wrought into a vestment fair,
Around her beauteous bosom in such bliss !
All through the day she'd clasp me ! Would I were
The shoes that bear her burden ! When the ways
Were wet with rain, her feet I then should kiss !

SYMONDS.

XXIII.

BEN posson gli occhi mia presso e lontano
Veder dove apparisce il tuo bel volto ;
Ma dove lor, a' piè, donna, è ben tolto
Portar le braccia e l' una e l' altra mano.
L' anima, l' intelletto intero e sano
Per gli occhi ascende più libero e sciolto
All' alta tuo beltà ; ma l' ardor molto
Non dà tal privilegio al corpo umano
Grave e mortal ; sì che mal segue poi
Senz' ale ancor d' un' angioletta il volo,
E l' veder sol pur se ne gloria e loda.
Deh ! se tu puoi nel ciel quanto tra noi,
Fa' del mio corpo tutto un occhio solo ;
Nè fia poi parte in me che non ti goda.

XXIII.

My eyes may wander, whether far or near,
Wherever shows itself thy face so fair;
But yet my feet, O Lady, may not dare
To bring my arms within this vision's sphere.
The soul, the intellect, intact and clear
Ascendeth through the eyes with freedom, where
Thy beauty reigns; yet all our longing ne'er
Can serve to make the human body freer:
This heavy mortal frame doth strive but ill,
Wingless, with angel's lofty flight to vie,
And all its boast and pleasure are to see.
Ah! if in heaven, as here, thou hast thy will,
Make thou my body all one single eye,
That I may have no part but joys in thee.

E. C.

XXIV.

SPIRTO ben nato, in cui si specchia e vede
Nelle tuo belle membra oneste e care
Quante natura e 'l ciel tra no' può fare,
Quand' a null' altra suo bell' opra cede :
Spirto leggiadro, in cui si spera e crede
Dentro, come di fuor nel viso appare,
Amor, pietà, mercè ; cose sì rare,
Che ma' furn' in beltà con tanta fede :
L' amor mi prende, e la beltà mi lega ;
La pietà, la mercè con dolci sguardi
Ferma speranz' al cor par che ne doni.
Qual uso o qual governo al mondo niega,
Qual crudeltà per tempo, o qual più tardi,
C' a sì bel viso morte non perdoni ?

XXIV.

THOU high-born spirit, on whose countenance,
Pure and beloved, is seen reflected all
That Heaven and Nature can on earth achieve,
Surpassing all their beauteous works with one ;
Fair spirit, within whom we hope to find,
As in thine outward countenance appears,
Love, piety, and mercy, — things so rare
As with such faith were ne'er in beauty found, —
Love seizes me, and beauty chains my soul.
The pitying love of thy blest countenance
Gives to my heart, it seems, firm confidence.
Thou faithless world, thou sad deceitful life,
What law, what envious decree, denies
That Death should spare a work so beautiful ?

TAYLOR.

XXV.

DIMMI di grazia, amor, se gli occhi mei
Veggono 'l ver della beltà ch' aspiro,
O s' io l' ho dentro allor che, dov' io miro,
Veggio più bello el viso di costei.
Tu 'l de' saper, po' che tu vien con lei
A torm' ogni mie pace, ond' io m' adiro ;
Nè vorre' manco un minimo sospiro,
Nè men ardente foco chiederei.
La beltà che tu vedi è ben da quella ;
Ma crescie poi ch' a miglior loco sale,
Se per gli occhi mortali all' alma corre.
Quivi si fa divina, onesta e bella,
Com' a sè simil vuol cosa immortale :
Questa, e non quella, a gli occhi tuo' precorre.

XXV.

POET.

TELL me, O Love, I pray thee, do mine eyes
Behold that Beauty's truth which I admire,
Or lives it in my heart,— for wheresoe'er
I turn, more fair her countenance appears ?
Thou well must know, for thou dost come with her,
To take from me my peace, whence I complain ;
And yet I would not wish one brief sigh less,
Nor that the flame within me were less strong.

LOVE.

The Beauty thou regardest is from her,
But grows as to a better place it riseth,
If through the mortal eyes it finds the soul.
There it becomes ennobled, fair, divine ;
For immortal thing assimilates the pure :
This one, and not the other, meets thine eye.

TAYLOR.

XXVIII.

LA vita del mie amor non è 'l cor mio,
Ch' amor, di quel ch' io t' amo, è senza core;
Dov' è cosa mortal piena d' errore,
Esser non può già ma', nè pensier rio.
Amor nel dipartir l' alma da Dio
Me fe' san occhio, e te luc' e splendore;
Nè può non rivederlo in quel che muore
Di te, per nostro mal, mie gran disio.
Come dal foco el caldo esser diviso
Non può, dal bell' eterno ogni mie stima,
Ch' esalta, ond' ella vien, chi più 'l somiglia.
Tu c' hai negli occhi tutto 'l paradiso,
Per ritornar là dov' i' t' ama' prima,
Ricorro ardendo sott' alle tuo ciglia.

XXVIII.

THE life spring of my love is not my heart ;
I love thee with a love devoid of heart,
There tending where nor human passion, fraught
With error, nor a guilty thought is found.
Love, when our souls proceeded forth from God,
My vision clear, and Thee all splendor made ;
And still I seem its traces to behold,
E'en in thy frame which sin has mortal made.
As heat from fire is not divisible,
Thus with the Eternal blends the Beautiful,
And I their emanations ever hail.
Beholding in thine eyes bright Paradise,
Ever beneath their radiance I would dwell,
And thus return where first I loved thee so.

HARFORD.

XXX.

VEGGIO co' bei vostri occhi un dolce lume,
Che co' miei ciechi già veder non posso;
Porto co' vostri piedi un pondo a dosso,
Che de' mie' zoppi non è già costume;
Volo con le vostr' ale senza piume;
Col vostr' ingegno al ciel sempre son mosso;
Dal vostr' arbitrio son pallido e rosso;
Freddo al sol, caldo alle più fredde brume.
Nel voler vostro è sol la voglia mia,
I mie' pensier nel vostro cor si fanno,
Nel vostro fiato son le mia parole.
Come luna da sè sol par ch' io sia;
Chè gli occhi nostri in ciel veder non sanno
Se non quel tanto che n' accende il sole.

XXX

THROUGH your clear eyes I view a beauteous light,
That my dark sight would ever seek in vain ;
With your firm steps a burden I support,
Which my weak power was never used to bear.
I soar aloft, unplumed, upon your wings,
By your intelligence to heaven am raised ;
Your smile or frown maketh me pale or red,
Cold in the sun, warm 'mid severest chills.
In your will is mine own will ever fixed ;
My thoughts find birth and growth within your heart ;
My words are from your spirit only drawn ;
And like the moon, alone in heaven, I seem,
That to our eyes were indiscernible,
Save by that light which from the sun proceeds.

TAYLOR.

XXXII.

S' un casto amor, s' una pietà superna,
S' una fortuna infra dua amanti equale,
S' un' aspra sorte all' un dell' altro cale,
S' un spirto, s' un voler duo cor governa ;
S' un' anima in duo corpi è fatta eterna,
Ambo levando al cielo e con pari ale ;
S' amor d' un colpo e d' un dorato strale
Le viscier di duo petti arda e discierna ;
S' amar l' un l' altro, e nessun se medesmo,
D' un gusto e d' un diletto, a tal mercede,
C' a un fin voglia l' uno e l' altro porre
Se mille e mille non sarien centesmo
A tal nodo d' amore, a tanta fede ;
E sol l' isdegnio il può rompere e sciorre ?

XXXII.

If a chaste love, a piety supernal,
A fortune to two lovers equal still
That grief to one doth bring the other ill,
One spirit binding both with bond fraternal;
If one soul in two frames becomes eternal,
To heaven rising both with equal wing ;
If love, with one gold arrow from its string,
Within both hearts kindles a flame internal ;
If each the other loves, and loves himself no more,
And love all joy but its own love resigns ;
And the same end, the will of both must choose ;
And thousand proofs like these, and yet a thousand more,
Are scarce a tithe such faith, such love designs, —
Can wrath itself such loving bondage loose ?

E. D. C.

XXXVIII.

RENDETE a gli occhi miei, o fonte o fiume,
L' onde della non vostra e salda vena,
Che più v' innalza, e cresce, e con più lena
Che non è 'l vostro natural costume.
E tu, folt' air, che 'l celeste lume
Tempri a' tristi occhi, de' sospir miei piena,
Rendigli al cor mio lasso, e rasserenata
Tua seura faccia al mio visivo acume.
Renda la terra i passi a le mie piante,
Ch' ancor l' erba germogli che gli è tolta ;
E 'l suono Ecco, già sorda a' miei lamenti ;
Gli sguardi a gli occhi miei, tue luci sante ;
Ch' io possa altra bellezza un' altra volta
Amar, po' che di me non ti contenti.

XXXVIII.

GIVE back unto mine eyes, ye fount and rill,
Those streams, not yours, that are so full and strong,
That swell your springs and roll your waves along
With force unwonted in your native hill !
And thou, dense air, weighed with my sighs so chill,
That hidest heaven's own light thick mists among,
Give back those sighs to my sad heart, nor wrong
My visual ray with thy dark face of ill !
Let earth give back the footprints that I wore,
That the bare grass I spoiled may sprout again ;
And Echo, now grown deaf, my cries return !
Loved eyes, unto mine eyes those looks restore,
And let me woo another not in vain,
Since how to please thee I shall never learn !

SYMONDS

XL.

NON so se s' è la desiata luce
Del suo primo fattor, che l' alma sente ;
O se dalla memoria della gente
Alcun' altra beltà nel cor traluce ;
O se fama o se sognio alcun prodduce
Agli occhi manifesto, al cor presente ;
Di sè lasciando un non so che cocente,
Ch' è forse or quel ch' a pianger mi conduce ;
Quel ch' i' sento e ch' i' cerco : e chi mi guidi
Meco non è ; nè so ben veder dove
Trovar mel possa, e par c' altri mel mostri.
Questo, signior, m' avvien, po' ch' i' vi vidi ;
C' un dolce amaro, un sì e no mi muove : !
Certo saranno stati gli occhi vostri.

XL.

I KNOW not if it be the imaged light
Of its first Maker which the soul doth feel,
Or if, derived from memory or the mind,
Some other beauty shine into the heart ;
Or if the ardent ray of its first state
Doth still resplendent beam within the mind,
Leaving I know not what unrestful pain,
Which is perchance the cause that makes me weep.
That which I see and feel is not with me :
I have no guide, nor know I where to look
To find one ; yet it seems as if revealed.
Thus, lady, have I been since I beheld you ;
Moved by a Yes and No, — sweet bitterness !
It surely was the effect your eyes produced.

TAYLOR.

XLIII.

PERCHÈ Febo non torc' e non distende
D' intorn' a questo globo fredd' e molle
Le braccia sua lucenti, el vulgo volle
Notte chiamar quel sol che non comprende.
E tant' è debol, che s' alcun accende
Un picciol torchio, in quella parte tolle
La vita dalla nott'; e tant' è folle,
Che l' esca col fucil la squarcia e fende.
E se gli è pur che qualche cosa sia,
Cert' è figlia del sol e della terra ;
Chè l' un tien l' ombra, e l' altro sol la cria.
Ma sia che vuol, che pur chi la loda erra ;
Vedova, scur', in tanta gelosia,
Ch' una lucciola sol gli può far guerra.

XLIII.

BECAUSE Hyperion, journeying toward his hall,
Turns on the tearful Earth no more his face,
Denying this sad mother his embrace,
Why should we "night" yon doubtful daylight call?
'T is daylight sick, you say,—so weak withal,
One little candle can its life efface;
Nay, this brief spark can thrust it out of place,
Darting from flint, on tinder frail to fall.
Well, name her what you will; to me 't is clear
Night is Earth's daughter, fathered by the Sun.
Be it so; but never call her fair nor dear:
A black-robed widow she,—even such an one,
So jealous, and so full of idle fear,
That from the firefly's brisk assault she 'll run.

F. B. S.

XLIV.

O nott', o dolce tempo benchè nero,
(Con pace ogn' opra sempr' al fin assalta)
Ben ved' e ben intende chi t' esalta ;
E chi t' onor', ha l' intellett' intero.
Tu mozzi e tronchi ogni stanco pensiero ;
Chè l' umid' ombra ogni quiet' appalta :
E dall' infima parte alla più alta
In sogno spesso porti ov' ire spero.
O ombra del morir, per cui sì ferma
Ogni miseria l' alma al cor nemica,
Ultimo delli afflitti e buon rimedio ;
Tu rendi sana nostra carn' inferma,
Rasciug' i pianti, e posi ogni fatica,
E furi a chi ben vive ogn' ir' e tedio.

XLIV.

O NIGHT ! O season fair, though black thou be,
All strife in thee doth find its peaceful end ;
Clear eyes, pure hearts, take thee to be their friend,
And wholesome are his thoughts who honors thee.
Thou lopp'st away all weary cares from me ;
While dewy shades unbroken quiet lend,
In dreams thou leadest me where I would wend,
And high exalt'st me, from low passion free.
Image of death ! on thee the deathless soul
Stays every sorrow fatal to life's peace.
Irksome no more the good man's moments flow :
His flesh and sense infirm thou makest whole,
His tears thou driest, his weary labors cease, —
Latest and best release from haunting woe.

F. B. S.

L.

S' i' avessi creduto al primo sguardo
Di quest' alma fenice al caldo sole
Rinnovarmi per foco, come suole
Nell' ultima vecchiezza, ond' io tutt' ardo;
Qual più veloce cervio o lince o pardo
Segue 'l suo bene e fuggie quel che dole,
Agli atti, al riso, all' oneste parole
Sarie cors' anzi, ond' or son presto e tardo.
Ma perchè più dolermi, po' ch' i' veggio
Negli occhi di quest' angel lieto e solo
Mie pace, mie riposo e mie salute?
Forse che prima sarie stato il peggio
Vederlo udirlo, s' or di pari a volo
Seco m' impenna a seguir suo virtute.

L.

HAD I but earlier known that from the eyes
Of that bright soul that fires me like the sun,
I might have drawn new strength my race to run,
Burning as burns the phoenix ere it dies ;
Even as the stag, or lynx, or leopard flies
To seek his pleasure and his pain to shun,
Each word, each smile of her would I have won,
Flying where now sad age all flight denies.
Yet why complain ? For even now I find
In that glad angel's face, so full of rest,
Health and content, heart's ease and peace of mind.
Perchance I might have been less simply blest
Finding her sooner ; if 't is age alone
That lets me soar with her to seek God's throne.

SYMONDS.

LI.

TORNAMI al tempo allor che lenta e sciolta
Al cieco ardor m' era la briglia e 'l freno ;
Rendimi 'l volto angelico sereno,
Onde fu seco ogni virtù sepolta ;
E' passi spessi e con fatica molta,
Che son sì lenti a chi è d' anni pieno ;
Tornami l' acqua e 'l foco in mezzo il seno,
Se vuo' di me saziarti un' altra volta.
E s' egli è pur, amor, che tu sol viva
De' dolci amari pianti de' mortali,
D' un vecchio stanco oma' puo' goder poco ;
Chè l' alma, quasi giunta all' altra riva,
Fa scudo a tuo' con più pietosi strali :
E d' un legni' arso fa vil pruova il foco.

LI

RETURN me to the time when loose the curb,
And my blind ardor's rein was unrestrained ;
Restore the face, angelic and serene,
Which took from Nature all she had of charm ;
Restore the steps, wasted with toil and pain,
That are so slow to one now full of years ;
Bring back the tears, the fire within my breast,
If thou wouldest see me glow and weep again.
Yet if 't is true, O Love, that thou dost live
Alone upon our sweet and bitter tears,
What canst thou hope from an old dying man ?
Now that my soul has almost reached the shore,
'T is time to prove the darts of other love,
And become food of a more worthy fire.

TAYLOR.

LII.

Non vider gli occhi miei cosa mortale
Allor che ne' bei vostri intera pace
Trovai; ma dentro, ov' ogni mal dispiace,
Chi d' amor l' alma a sè simil m' assale.
E se creata a Dio non fusse eguale,
Altro che 'l bel di fuor, ch' agli occhi piace,
Più non vorria; ma perch' è sì fallace,
Trascende nella forma universale.
Io dico, ch' a chi vive quel che muore
Quetar non può disir; nè par s' aspetti
L' eterno al tempo, ove altri cangia il pelo.
Voglia sfrenata el senso è, non amore,
Che l' alma uccide; e 'l nostro fa perfetti
Gli amici qui, ma più per morte in cielo.



LII.

No mortal object did these eyes behold
When first they met the placid light of thine,
And my soul felt her destiny divine,
And hope of endless peace in me grew bold :
Heaven-born, the soul a heavenward course must hold.
Beyond the visible world she soars to seek
(For what delights the sense is false and weak)
Ideal Form, the universal mould.
The wise man, I affirm, can find no rest
In that which perishes ; nor will he lend
His heart to aught which doth on time depend.
'T is sense, unbridled will, and not true love,
That kills the soul ; love betters what is best,
Even here below, but more in heaven above.

WORDSWORTH.

✓

LIII.

NON è sempre di colpa aspra e mortale
D' una immensa bellezza un fero ardore,
Se poi sì lascia liquefatto il core,
Che 'n breve il pènetri un divino strale.
Amore isveglia e destà e impenna l' ale,
Nè l' alto vol prescrive al van furore ;
Qual primo grado, ch' al suo creatore,
Di quel non sazia, l' alma ascende e sale.
L' amor di quel ch' io parlo in alto aspira;
Donna, è dissimil troppo ; e mal conviensi
Arder di quella al cor saggio e virile.
L' un tira al cielo, e l' altro in terra tira ;
Nell' alma l' un, l' altro abita ne' sensi,
E l' arco tira a cose basse e vile.

LIII.

IT is not always vain and empty sin
To love a glorious beauty with great love,
If thus diviner arrows from above
May penetrate the softened heart within.
Love wakes and moves and plumes the wing
For highest flight ; and oft its burning ray,
As a first step, shall on its upward way
The aspiring soul to its Creator bring.
That love whereof I speak aspires on high :
Lady, 't is most unlike ; for suits but ill
An earth-born flame the wise and manly heart.
One draws to heaven, but one on earth would lie ;
One doth the soul, one but the senses, fill,
Bending its bow to base and villain Art.

E. D. C.

LIV.

VEGGIO nel tuo bel viso, signor mio,
Quel che narrar mal puossi in questa vita :
L' anima, della carne ancor vestita,
Con esso è già più volte asciesa a Dio.
E se 'l vulgo malvagio isciocco e rio
Di quel che sente, altrui segnia e addita ;
Non è l' intensa voglia men gradita,
L' amor, la fede e l' onesto desio.
A quel pietoso fonte, onde siàn tutti,
S' assembra ogni beltà che qua si vede,
Più c' altra cosa, alle persone accorte ;
Nè altro saggio abbiàn nè altri frutti
Del cielo in terra : e s' i' v' amo con fede,
Trascendo a Dio, e fo dolce la morte.

LIV.

READ by my thoughts, thy features seem to shine
With that which human words can ill explain,
A soul still compassed with its earthly chain,
But beauteous bright and fired with Love divine ;
And if the base and envious world malign
And point with scorn at those who think like thee,
Unchanging still with firm fidelity,
My heart, my faith, my preference, are thine.
Deep in that source whence our existence flows
Beauty's transcendent forms are all combined
Beyond aught other attributes of mind.
No trace of heaven on earth we elsewhere meet ;
And he who faithful love on thee bestows
Aspires to God, and thinks of death as sweet.

HARFORD.

LV.

TU sa' ch' i' so, signior mie, che tu sai
Ch' i' venni per goderti più da presso ;
E sai ch' i' so, che tu sa' ch' i' son desso.
A che più indugio a salutarci omai ?
Se vera è la speranza che mi dài,
Se vero è 'l buon desio che m' è concesso,
Rompasi il mur frall' uno e l' altra messo ;
Chè doppia forza hann' i celati guai.
S' i' amo sol di te, signior mie caro,
Quel che di te più ami, non ti sdegni ;
Che l' un dell' altro spirto s' innamora.
Quel che nel tuo bel volto bramo e 'mparo,
E mal compres' è dagli umani ingegni,
Chi 'l vuol veder, convien che prima mora.

LV.

THOU knowest, love, I know that thou dost know
That I am here more near to thee to be,
And knowest that I know thou knowest me :
What means it then that we are sundered so ?
If they are true, these hopes that from thee flow,
If it is real, this sweet expectancy,
Break down the wall that stands 'twixt me and thee ;
For pain in prison pent hath double woe.
Because in thee I love, O my loved lord,
What thou best lovest, be not therefore stern :
Souls burn for souls, spirits to spirits cry !
I seek the splendor in thy fair face stored ;
Yet living man that beauty scarce can learn,
And he who fain would find it, first must die.

SYMONDS.

LVI.

PER ritornar là donde venne fora,
L' immortal forma al tuo carcer terreno
Venne com' angel di pietà si pieno
Che sana ogn' intelletto, e 'l mondo onora.
Questo sol m' arde, e questo m' innamora ;
Non pur di fora il tuo volto sereno :
Ch' amor non già di cosa che vien meno
Tien ferma speme, in cu' virtù dimora.
Nè altro avvien di cose altere e nuove
In cui si preme la natura ; e 'l cielo
È ch' a lor parto largo s' apparecchia.
Nè Dio, suo grazia, mi si mostra altrove,
Più che 'n alcun leggiadro e mortal velo ;
E quel sol amo, perchè 'n quel si specchia.

LVI.

As one who will reseek her home of light,
Thy form immortal to this prison-house
Descended, like an angel piteous,
To heal all hearts and make the whole world bright.
Tis this that thralls my soul in love's delight,
Not thy clear face of beauty glorious ;
For he who harbors virtue still will choose
To love what neither years nor death can blight.
So fares it ever with things high and rare
Wrought in the sweat of nature ; heaven above
Shows on their birth the blessings of her prime :
Nor hath God deigned to show himself elsewhere
More clearly than in human forms sublime ;
Which, since they image him, alone I love.

SYMONDS.

LIX.

NON più che 'l foco il fabbro il ferro istende
Al concetto suo caro e bel lavoro;
Nè senza foco alcuno artista l' oro
Al sommo grado suo raffina e rende:
Nè l' unica fenice se riprende,
Se non prim' arsa. Ond' io, s' ardendo moro,
Spero più chiar resurger tra coloro
Che morte accrescie, e 'l tempo non offende.
Del foco di ch' i' parlo ho gran ventura
C' ancor per rinnovarmi abb' in me loco,
Sendo già quasi infra 'l numer de' morti.
O ver s' al cielo asciende per natura
Al suo elemento, e ch' io converso in foco
Sie, come fie che seco non mi porti ?

LIX.

By fire the artist moulds the ductile steel
Into the beauteous forms his thought defines ;
And fire expels the alloys, which else conceal
The gold's pure lustre, and its mass refines.
Nor can the Phœnix, matchless bird, resume
Its plumes except it burn. Be it my doom
Thus into death to burn, since Heaven assigns
Triumph o'er death to such in realms of light.
O death how sweet ! O conflagration bright !
If thus resolved to ashes, upward springs
The soul, no more a mortal home to claim ;
Or rather, if transmuted into flame,
Which has by Nature's law a heavenward aim,
I 'm wafted thither on immortal wings.

HARFORD.

LX.

BEN può talor col mio ardente desio
Salir la speme, e non esser fallace ;
Chè s' ogni nostro affetto al ciel dispiace,
A che fin fatto avrebbe il mondo Dio ?
Qual più giusta cagion dell' amarti io
È, che dar gloria a quell' eterna pace
Onde pende il divin che di te piace,
E ch' ogni cor gentil fa casto e pio ?
Fallace speme ha sol l' amor, che muore
Con la beltà ch' ogni momento scema,
Ond' è suggetta al variar d' un bel viso.
Dolce è ben quella in un pudico core
Che per cangiar di scorza o d' ora estrema
Non manca, e qui caparra il paradiso.

LX.

YES ! hope may with my strong desire keep pace,
And I be undeluded, unbetrayed ;
For if of our affections none find grace
In sight of Heaven, then wherefore hath God made
The world which we inhabit ? Better plea
Love cannot have, than that in loving thee
Glory to that eternal Peace is paid,
Who such divinity to thee imparts
As hallows and makes pure all gentle hearts.
His hope is treacherous only whose love dies
With beauty, which is varying every hour ;
But in chaste hearts, uninfluenced by the power
Of outward change, there blooms a deathless flower,
That breathes on earth the air of paradise.

WORDSWORTH.

LXII.

IN MORTE DI VITTORIA COLONNA.

QUAND' el ministro de' sospir me' tanti
Al mondo, agli occhi mei, a sè si tolse ;
Natura, che fra noi degnar lo volse,
Restò in vergognia, e chi lo vide in pianti.
Ma non come degli altri oggi si vanti
Del sol del sol, ch' allor ci spense e tolse,
Morte, c' amor ne vinse, e farlo il tolse
In terra vivo e 'n ciel fra gli altri santi.
Così credette morte iniqua e rea
Finir il suon delle virtute sparte,
E l' alma che men bella esser potea.
Contrari effetti alluminan le carte
Di vita più che 'n vita non solea,
E morto ha 'l ciel, c' allor non avea parte.

LXII.

ON THE DEATH OF VITTORIA COLONNA.

WHEN she who was the cause of all my sighs
Departed from the world, herself, and me,
Nature, who fain had made us worthy her,
Rested ashamed, and who had seen her wept.
But let not boastful Death, who quenched the light
Of this our sun of suns, be all too vain ;
Since love hath conquered him, and let her live,
Both here on earth and 'mong the saints above.
It seemed a cruel and unrighteous thing
For Death to make her scattered virtues dumb,
And bear her soul where it might show less fair.
But (contradiction strange !) her writings now
Make her more living than she was in life ;
And heaven receives her dead, where she had else no part.

E. C.

LXV.

A GIORGIO VASARI.

[1554.]

GIUNTO è già 'l corso della vita mia,
Con tempestoso mar per fragil barca,
Al comun porto, ov' a render si varca
Conto e ragion d' ogn' opra trista e pia.
Onde l' affettuosa fantasia,
Che l' arte mi fece idol' e monarca,
Conosco or ben quant' era d' error carca,
E quel ch' a mal suo grado ogn' uom desia.
Gli amorosi pensier, già vani e lieti,
Che fiено or, s' a duo morte m' avvicino ?
D' una so 'l certo, e l' altra mi minaccia.
Nè pinger ne scolpir fia più che quieti
L' anima volta a quell' Amor divino
Ch' aperse, a prender noi, in croce le braccia

LXV.

TO GIORGIO VASARI.

[1554.]

WELL-NIGH the voyage now is overpast,
And my frail bark, through troubled seas and rude,
Draws near that common haven where at last
Of every action, be it evil or good,
Must due account be rendered. Well I know
How vain will then appear that favored art,
Sole idol long, and monarch of my heart ;
For all is vain that man desires below.
And now remorseful thoughts the past upbraid,
And fear of twofold death my soul alarms, —
That which must come, and that beyond the grave.
Picture and sculpture lose their feeble charms,
And to that Love divine I turn for aid
Who from the cross extends his arms to save.

HAZLITT.

LXVII.

NON è più bassa o vil cosa terrena
Che quel che, senza te, mi sento e sono;
Ond' all' alto desir chiede perdono
La debile mie propria e stanca lena.
Deh porgi, Signor mio, quella catena
Che seco annoda ogni celeste dono;
La fede dico, a che mi stringo e sprono;
Nè, mie colpa, n' ho grazia intiera e piena.
Tanto mi fie maggior quant' è più raro
Il don de' doni; e maggior fia, se senza,
Pace e contento il mondo in sè non have.
Po' che non fusti del tuo sangue avaro,
Che sarà di tal don la tua clemenza,
Se 'l ciel non s' apre a noi con altra chiave ?

LXVII.

No earthly object is more base and vile
Than I, without Thee, miserable am.
My spirit now, midst errors multiform,
Weak, wearied, and infirm, pardon implores.
O Lord most high ! extend to me that chain
Which with itself links every gift divine :
Chiefest to faith I bid my soul aspire,
Flying from sense, whose path conducts to death.
The rarer be this gift of gifts, the more
May it to me abound ; and still the more,
Since the world yields not true content and peace.
By faith alone the fount of bitter tears
Can spring within my heart, made penitent :
No other key unlocks the gate of heaven.

HARFORD.

LXX.

CARICO d' anni e di peccati pieno,
E col tristo uso radicato e forte,
Vicin mi veggio a l' una e l' altra morte,
E parte 'l cor nutrisco di veleno.
Nè propie forze ho, c' al bisogno sieno
Per cangiar vita, amor, costume o sorte,
Senza le tuo divine e chiare scorte,
Più che da noi, per noi qui guida e freno.
Non basta, Signor mio, che tu m' invogli
Di ritornar là dove l' alma sia,
Non come prima di nulla, creata.
Anzi che del mortal la privi e spogli,
Prego m' ammezzi l' alta e erta via,
E fie più chiara e certa la tornata.

LXX.

BORNE down by weight of years, and full of sin,
And in bad habits rooted and confirmed,
To one and t' other death I 'm drawing near,
And still on poison partly feed myself ;
Nor have I, prompt for use, the needful power
My life, love, manners, and my lot to change
Without thy aid enlightening and divine,
To my fallacious course a guide and curb.
O Lord ! but thou must do for me far more
Than to invite my soul there to return,
Where out of nothing it was formed by thee.
Before this mortal frame thou layest low,
So by repentance smooth for me the way,
That this return to thee be sure and blest.

HARFORD.

LXXII.

DEH fammiti vedere in ogni loco !

Se da mortal bellezza arder mi sento,

A presso al tuo mi sarà foco ispento,

E io nel tuo sarò, com' ero, in foco.

Signor mie caro, i' te sol chiamo e 'nvoco

Contra l' inutil mie cieco tormento :

Tu sol puo' rinnovarmi fuora e drento

Le voglie, e 'l senno, e 'l valor lento e poco.

Tu desti al tempo ancor quest' alma diva,

E 'n questa spoglia ancor fragil' e stanca

L' incarserasti, e con fiero destino.

Che poss' io altro, che così non viva ?

Ogni ben senza te, Signor, mi manca.

Il cangiar sorte è sol poter divino.

LXXII.

OH, make me see thee, Lord, in every place !
If burns my heart, to mortal beauty bent,
Near thine will be that earthly ardor spent,
And I aflame again with heavenly grace.
Oh, my dear Lord, thee I evoke and call
Against my blind and unavailing pain
Without, within. Thou canst renew again
My will, my sense, my strength so prone to fall !
Thou gavest once to time this spirit divine,
Clothed in this frail and heavy dress ;
Imprisoned here, and subject unto law,
What can I do to change this state of mine ?
Nought without thee avails my heart to bless :
A power divine alone for me new lot can draw.

E. D. C.

LXXIII.

SCARCO d' un' importuna e grave salma,
Signor mio caro, e dal mondo disciolto,
Qual fragil legno, a te stanco mi volto
Dall' orribil procella in dolce calma.
Le spine, e' chiodi, e l' un' e l' altra palma
Col tuo benigno umil pietoso volto
Prometton grazia di pentirsi molto,
E speme di salute alla trist' alma.
Non mirin con giustizia i tuoi santi occhi
Il mio passato, e 'l gastigato orecchio
Non tenda a quello il tuo braccio severo.
Tuo sangue sol mie colpe lavi e tocchi,
E più abbondi, quant' io son più vecchio,
Di pront' aita e di perdon' intero.

LXXIII.

ETERNAL Lord ! eased of a cumbrous load,
And loosened from the world, I turn to thee ;
Shun, like a shattered bark, the storm, and flee
To thy protection for a safe abode.
The crown of thorns, hands pierced upon the tree,
The meek, benign, and lacerated face,
To a sincere repentance promised grace,
To the sad soul give hope of pardon free.
With justice mark not thou, O Light divine,
My fault, nor hear it with thy sacred ear ;
Neither put forth that way thy arm severe ;
Wash with thy blood my sins ; thereto incline
More readily the more my years require
Help, and forgiveness speedy and entire.

WORDSWORTH.

LXXV.

VORREI voler, Signior, quel ch' io non voglio :
Tra 'l foco e 'l cor di iaccia un vel s' asconde,
Che 'l foco ammorza ; onde non corrisponde
La penna all' opre, e fa bugiardo 'l foglio.
I' t' amo con la lingua, e poi mi doglio ;
Ch' amor non giungie al cor, nè so ben onde
Apra l' uscio alla grazia, che s' infonde
Nel cor, che scacci ogni spietato orgoglio.
Squarcia 'l vel tu, Signior, rompi quel muro
Che con la suo durezza ne ritarda
Il sol della tuo luce al mondo spenta.
Manda 'l preditione lume a noi venturo
Alla tuo bella sposa, acciò ch' io arda
E te senz' alcun dubbio il cor sol senta.

LXXV.

FAIN would I will, O Lord, what I'm not willing!
'Twixt fire and heart a veil of ice is hidden,
Damping the fire; agreement thus forbidden
Between my pen and works makes false each leaf.
I love thee with the tongue, then count it grief
That love not reaches to the heart; since so is hid
The door to grace, whereby the heart were rid
Of impious pride its inmost temple filling.
Rend thou the veil, O Lord, break down this wall,
Which by its hardness keeps retarding so
Thy holy sunshine, in the world gone out.
Oh, send the light, so long foretold for all,
To thy fair bride, that so my soul may glow,
And feel thee inwardly, and never doubt!

J. S. D.

LXXVII.

MENTRE m' attrista e duol, parte m' è caro
Il pensier del passato, s' al cor riede
Mie miserie e peccati, e ragion chiede
Del tempo perso, onde non è riparo.
Caro m' è sol, perch' anzi morte imparo
Quant' ogni uman diletto ha corta fede;
Tristo m' è, ch' a trovar grazia e mercede
Nell' ultim' ora è pur dubbioso e raro.
Che, benchè alle promesse tue s' attenda,
Creder, Signore, è troppo grande ardire
Ch' ogni gran tardità pietà perdoni.
Ma pur par dal tuo sangue si comprenda
Quanto infinito fu 'l tuo gran martire,
Senza misura sien tuo' cari doni.

LXXVII.

MUCH it afflicts, and yet it soothes my mind
To dwell upon each thought of Time gone by,
Which memory recalls ; though reason mourns
Th' irreparable ill of wasted hours.

It soothes me, when the thought of death suggests
How brief, how transient, is each human joy ;
It grieves me since I scarcely dare to hope
Pardon and grace, thus late, for all my sins.
Despite thy promises, O Lord, 't would seem
Too much to hope that even love like thine
Can overlook my countless wanderings ;
And yet thy blood helps us to comprehend
That if thy pangs for us were measureless,
No less beyond all measure is thy grace.

HARFORD.

LXXXI.

(Imperfetto.)

LA forza d' un bel viso a che mi sprona ?
(Ch' altro non è ch' al mondo mi diletti)
Ascender vivo fra gli spiriti eletti,
Per grazia tal, ch' ogn' altra par men buona.
Se ben col suo fattor l' opra consuona,
Che colpa vuol giustizia ch' io n' aspetti,
S' amo, anzi ardo ? e per divin concetti,
Onoro e stimo ogni gentil persona ?

LXXXI.

(Imperfect.)

RAPT above earth by power of one fair face,
Hers in whose sway alone my heart delights,
I mingle with the blest on those pure heights
Where man, yet mortal, rarely finds a place.
With Him who made the work that work accords
So well, that by its help and through his grace
I raise my thoughts, inform my deeds and words,
Clasping her beauty in my soul's embrace.

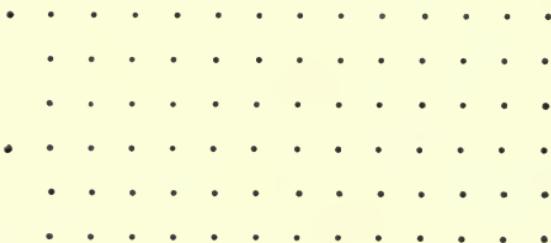
[*Thus, if from two fair eyes mine cannot turn,
I feel how in their presence doth abide
Light which to God is both the way and guide ;
And, kindling at their lustre, if I burn,
My noble fire emits the joyful ray
That through the realms of glory shines for aye.]*

WORDSWORTH.

LXXXIX.

(Imperfetto.)

BEN sarien dolce le preghiere mie,
Se virtù mi prestassi da pregarte:
Nel mio fragil terren non è già parte
Da frutto buon, che da sè nato sie.
Tu sol se' seme d' opre caste e pie,
Che là germoglian dove ne fa' parte:
Nessun proprio valor può seguitarte,
Se no gli mostri le tue sante vie.



LXXXIX.

(Imperfect.)

THE prayers I make will then be sweet indeed,
If Thou the spirit give by which I pray :
My unassisted heart is barren clay,
That of its native self can nothing feed.
Of good and pious works thou art the seed,
That quickens only where thou sayest it may ;
Unless thou show to us thine own true way,
No man can find it: Father! thou must lead.

[*Do thou, then, breathe those thoughts into my mind
By which such virtue may in me be bred,
That in thy holy footsteps I may tread ;
The fetters of my tongue do thou unbind,
That I may have the power to sing of thee,
And sound thy praises everlastingly.]*

WORDSWORTH.

CANZONI.

III.

OHIMÈ, ohimè ! ch' io son tradito
Da' giorni miei fugaci, e dallo specchio
Che 'l ver dice a ciascun che fiso 'l guarda.
Così n' avvien chi troppo al fin ritarda ;
Com' ho fatt' io, che 'l tempo m' è fuggito ;
Si trova come me 'n un giorno vecchio.
Nè mi posso pentir, nè m' apparecchio,
Nè mi consiglio, con la morte appresso.
Nemico di me stesso,
Inutilmente i pianti e' sospir verso :
Chè non è danno pari al tempo perso.

CANZONETS.

III.

AH, woe is me ! Alas ! when I revolve
My years gone by, wearied, I find not one
Wherein to call a single day my own.
Fallacious hopes, desires as vain, and thoughts
Of love compounded and of lover's woes
(No mortal joy has novelty for me),
Make up the sum ; I know, I feel, 't is so.
Thus have I ever strayed from Truth and Good :
Where'er I go, shifting from right to left,
Denser the shades, less bright the sun appears,
And I, infirm and worn, am nigh to fall.

HARFORD.

STANZE.

II.

ALLA SUA DONNA.

1.

Io crederrei, se tu fossi di sasso,
Amarti con tal fede, ch' i' potrei
Farti meco venir più che di passo;
Se fossi morto, parlar ti farei;
Se fossi in ciel, ti tirerei a basso
Co' pianti co' sospir co' priegi miei :
Sendo vivo e di carne, e qui tra noi,
Chi t' ama e serve che de' creder poi ?

STANZAS.

II.

TO HIS LADY.

1.

METHINKS, though thou wert stone, the charm I 'd know
(So strong and faithful is my love for thee)
To lead thee with me wheresoe'er I go ;
If thou wert dead, I 'd make thee speak to me ;
Wert thou in heaven, I 'd draw thee down below
With sighs, and prayers, and tears of agony :
But since as living flesh thou here dost dwell,
What hopes may not be his who loves thee well ?

E. C.

CAPITOLI.

III.

IN MORTE DI LODOVICO BUONARROTI SUO PADRE,

ESSENDONE GIÀ MORTO BUONARROTO SUO FRATELLO.

(Imperfetto.)

ANCOR che 'l cor già mi premesse tanto,
Per mie scampo credendo il gran dolore
N' uscissi con le lacrime e col pianto ;

Fortuna al fonte di cotale umore
Le radice e le vene ingrassa e 'mpingua
Per morte, e non per pena o duol minore,

Col tuo partire ; onde convien destingua
Dal figlio prima e tu morto dipoi,
Del quale or parlo, pianto, penna e lingua.

L' un m' era frate, e tu padre di noi ;
L' amore a quello, a te 'l debito strignie :
Non so qual pena più m' affigga o noi.

TRIPLETS.

III.

ON THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER, LODOVICO
BUONARROTI,

WHICH FOLLOWED SOON ON THAT OF HIS BROTHER [1534 OR 1536].

(Imperfect.)

DEEP grief such woe unto my heart did give,
I thought it wept the bitter pain away,
And tears and moans would let my spirit live.

But fate renews the fount of grief to-day,
And feeds each hidden root and secret vein
By death that doth still harder burden lay.

I of thy parting speak; and yet again
For him, of thee who later left me here,
My tongue and pen shall speak the separate pain.

He was my brother, thou our father dear;
Love clung to him and duty bound to thee,
Nor can I tell which loss I hold most near.

La memoria 'l fratel pur mi dipignie,
 E te sculpiscie vivo in mezzo 'l core,
 E più ch' allor pietà 'l volto mi tignie.

Pur mi quieta, che 'l debito c' allore
 Pagò 'l mie frate acerbo, e tu maturo :
 | Chè manco duole altrui chi vecchio muore.

Tanto all' increscitor men aspro e duro
 Esser diè 'l caso, quant' è più necesse ;
 Là dove 'l ver dal senso è più sicuro.

Ma chi è quel che morto non piangiesse
 Suo caro padre, c' ha veder non mai
 Quel che vedea infinite volte o spesse ?

Nostri intensi dolori e nostri guai
 Son come più e men ciascun gli sente.
 Quant' in me posson, tu Signior tel sai.

E se ben l' alma alla ragion consente,
 Tien tanto in collo, che vie più abbondo
 Po' doppo quella in esser più dolente.

E se 'l pensier, nel quale i' mi profondo,
 Non fussi che 'l ben morto in ciel si ridi
 Del timor del morire in questo mondo ;

Painted like life my brother stands to me ;
Thou art a sculptured image in my heart,
And most for thee my cheek is tinged with piety.

Thus am I soothed ; death early claimed the part
My brother owed, but in full ripeness thou.
He grieves us less who doth in age depart.

Less hard and sharp it is to death to bow
As growing age longs for its needful sleep,
Where true life is, safe from the senses now.

Ah ! who is he who sadly would not weep
To see the father dead he held so dear,
He ever, living still, in frequent sight did keep ?

Our griefs and woes to each alone are clear,
As more or less he feels their fatal power ;
Thou knowest, Lord ! to me the loss how near.

Though reason holds my soul some calmer hour,
'T is by such hard constraint I bind my grief ;
The lifted clouds again more darkly lower.

And but this thought can give my heart relief,
That he died well, and, resting, smiles in heaven
On death that brought in life a pain so brief.

Cresciere 'l duol: ma' dolorosi stridi
 Temprati son d' una credenza ferma,
 Che 'l ben vissuto, a morte me' s' annidi.

Nostro intelletto dalla carne inferma
 È tanto oppresso, che 'l morir più spiace
 Quanto più 'l falso persuaso afferma.

Novanta volte el sol suo chiara face
 Prim' ha nell' ociean bagniata e molle,
 Che tu sie giunto alla divina pace.

Or che nostra miseria el ciel ti tolle,
 Increscati di me che morto vivo,
 Come tuo mezzo qui nascier mi volle.

Tu se' del morir morto e fatto divo,
 Nè tem' or più cangiar vita nè voglia;
 Che quasi senza invidia non lo scrivo.

Fortuna e 'l tempo dentro a vostra soglia
 Non tenta trapassar, per cui s' adduce
 Fra no' dubbia letizia e cierta doglia.

Nube non è che scuri vostra luce,
 L' ore distinte a voi non fanno forza,
 Caso o necessità non vi conduce.

For deeper grief would grow and crush me even,
Did not firm faith convince my inmost mind,
Living well here, he nests himself in Heaven.

So closely doth the flesh the spirit bind,
That death the weary heart can most oppress
When erring sense forbids the truth to find.

Full ninety times in ocean's deep recess
Of cooling shade, the sun its torch had laid,
Ere peace Divine thy weary heart did bless.

Oh, pity me who now art left here dead !
O thou through whom Heaven willed me to be born,
Since Heaven at last thy suffering life has stayed !

Divine thou art ! Death of death's power is shorn,
Nor fearest thou life's changes ever more ;
I write almost with envy, here forlorn.

Fortune and Time, which bring us grief so sure
With joy uncertain, claim no more their right ;
Their fickle changes enter not your door.

There is no cloud to dim your shining light,
No chance nor need to bind your onward way.
No time to urge you with its rapid flight.

Vostro splendor per notte non s' ammorza,
Nè crescie ma' per giorno, benchè chiaro,
Sie quand' el sol fra no' il caldo rinforza.

Nel tuo morire el mie morire imparo,
Padre mie caro, e nel pensier ti veggio
Dove 'l mondo passar ne fa di raro.

Non è, com' alcun crede, morte il peggio
A chi l' ultimo dì trasciende al primo,
Per grazia, eterno appresso al divin seggio;

Dove, Die grazia, ti prossummo e stimo,
E spero di veder, se 'l freddo core
Mie ragion traggie dal terrestre limo.

E se tra 'l padre e 'l figlio ottimo amore
Crescie nel ciel, crescendo ogni virtute,

• • • • • • • • • • • • •

Your splendor changes not by night nor day,—
Though dark the one, the other heavenly clear,—
Nor when the sun sends down its warmer ray.

By thine own death, O father ever dear,
I learn to die, and see thee in my thought,
Where the world rarely lets us linger near.

Think not, like some, death only evil wrought
To one whom Grace to God's own seat has led,
And from the last day to the first has brought;

Where, thanks to God, thou art, my soul has said,
And hopes to meet thee if my own cold heart
By reason rises from its earthly bed.

And if 'twixt son and father Love's best art
Grows yet in heaven, as every virtue grows —

E. D. C.

N O T E S.

NOTES.

THE STATUE OF NIGHT. — About the year 1521 Michelangelo was engaged on the sculptures of the Medicean Chapel. This labor lasted for many years, which were times of great political trouble in his beloved city. This cause filled his mind with profound melancholy, which he has expressed in the beautiful Statue of Night. One morning the verses in the text were found attached to this statue. Vasari says their authorship was unknown, but it was afterwards learned that they were written by Giovanni da Carlo Strozzi. Michelangelo's answer shows how deeply they touched him.

PIGRAM IV. — "Remembering that May, which is so beautiful a month, gives us no fruits, he seems desirous of admonishing us to seek in life something more substantial than pleasures." — GUASTI.

PIGRAM V. — Guasti refers this to Dante's sonnet "Amore e cor gentil son una cosa." The readers of the "Dial" will be reminded of Mrs. Hooper's beautiful lines :—

"I slept, and dreamed that life was Beauty ;
I woke, and found that life was Duty."

EPITAPHS. — We know little else of the young man whose premature death inspired these beautiful poems of grief, which express rather the varied emotions which his own sorrows had called up in the poet's heart than those peculiar to an individual loss. He evidently designed a

monument for the wonderful youth, but I cannot learn that it was ever executed. These epitaphs were sent to Luigi del Riccio, and are often accompanied by a brief explanatory note, sometimes intimating that the poems are in return for gifts. Once he writes : “I did not wish to send it to you, because it is a very stupid thing; but the trout and truffle would compel Heaven itself. I commend myself to you.” And again : “If you do not wish these, do not send me anything more.” And again : “These are for the trout; but if they do not please you, do not pickle any more without pepper.”

MADRIGALS.

MADRIGAL III. — This madrigal was much changed by the nephew, and Southey’s rendering is hardly more than a paraphrase of the latter’s version. A translation of Guasti’s prose version is here subjoined : —

“ That which contents the multitude is not always so highly valued and precious in the world that there may not be some one who frequently finds that bitter which to many is sweet. Good taste — that is, right feeling — is so rare that at times one is compelled to pander to the desires of the crowd, while within he is pleased with himself alone. And even I, while yielding to the desires of the multitude, constantly learn to know better the inner idea of the beautiful, unseen by that crowd without, which saddens my soul and does not hear its groans. The world is blind, and aids most with its honors and praises him toward whom it is most chary of them ; like a whip which, in admonishing, makes us smart.”

MADRIGAL IV. — This translation of Harford’s is not literal ; but it so well preserves the spirit of the original, and is so old a favorite, that I cannot attempt to make a better one.

MADRIGAL V. — The last six lines of this madrigal were so much changed by the nephew as to destroy the force of the thought. A literal translation of Guasti would be, —

“ That love may undeceive me, and piety the truth may write,
That the soul freed from itself

May not turn to its old errors
 During the rest of life, and may live less blind,
 I ask of you, high and divine lady,
 To know if in heaven has less esteem
 The humble sinner than the proud well-doer.

MADRIGAL VI. — This translation is neither literal nor very poetic ; but the poem is so interesting for its reference to Vittoria Colonna that it must not be omitted.

MADRIGAL VII. — This madrigal gives his whole philosophy of Art and Beauty. The impulse is always from above, not from earth.

MADRIGAL VIII. — The last line is not true to either version ; but in so playful an effusion some license may be pardoned to the translator.

MADRIGAL XII. — This very beautiful madrigal is difficult to translate. I have never forgotten a striking version of the fourth line which I once heard from Dr. Bartol, —

“The more the marble wastes, the more the statue grows.”

MADRIGAL XV. — Taylor has not given the force of the last word “stenta,” “suffers.”

MADRIGAL XVIII. — The rhythm of this madrigal is spoiled by the nephew, who has lengthened the lines. A truer translation is desirable, but it is too important to be omitted.

MADRIGAL XXII. — This madrigal is somewhat obscure, as even Guasti acknowledges ; but it is characteristic, and the rather free measure gives its spirit. The “face and eyes and flowing hair” possibly apply to the same person referred to in Sonnet XX.

MADRIGAL XXV. — The nephew in his version omitted the exclamation “O dio !” and changed the last three lines. A literal rendering of the true reading would be : —

What thing is this, O love,
 Which enters into the heart by the eyes ;
 And if by chance it overflows
 For a little while, appears to increase within ?

MADRIGAL XXXIX.—The nephew's version is slightly altered, but not so much so as to change the sense; and Harford's last line is not literally true. The original reads,—

“Evil injures much more than good aids.”

MADRIGAL LIII.—The last two lines are entirely an addition of the nephew's.

MADRIGAL LXXVIII.—This translation is attributed to Southey by Harford.

It is perhaps needless to say that I do not in any case indorse the doctrine of a poem by selecting it for publication. I should seriously differ from the great poet in considering human life an evil, and death blessed as an escape from it, if I regarded these words as the final conclusions of his intellect formulated into doctrine. I look upon them as expressions of a feeling which comes to most men when the burdens of life weigh heavily, and the imagination helps in bearing them by picturing the joys of release. “Whom the gods love, die young” is a phrase which often comes to our lips, yet which we do not seriously believe. But if we picture the lonely artist, as Mr. Cranch has done in his beautiful ode,¹—

“Whether in lonely nights
With Poesy's delights
He cheered his solitude,
In sculptured sonnets wrought
His firm and graceful thought,
Like marble altars in some dark and mystic wood,”—

and also remember the prevailing sentiments of the age, the glowing and terrible prophecies of Savonarola, which so impressed his mind, and the misery of his country, we cannot wonder that—

“In all his music the pathetic minor
Our ears doth cross.”

¹ Ode read at the New England Women's Club on the celebration of Michelangelo's four-hundredth birthday.

When Dr. T. W. Parsons kindly set himself to the task of translating one of these poems, he felt so entirely out of sympathy with this pessimistic view of human life, that instead of translating any of the poems literally, he has sent me this admirable sonnet, which gives the answering chord and completes the harmony of thought. I am sure that Michelangelo also rejoiced in victory after struggle, and well-earned rest from toil.

SONNET

SUGGESTED BY A THOUGHT OF M. ANGELO.

*"Che 'n ciel quel solo ha miglior sorte
Ch' ebbe al suo parto piu presso la morte."*

The days draw near to face thy final hour !
My Bible tells me so — my friends repeat —
And every morn my mirror says the same.

When old ambition tempts, I feel that power
Has parted from me. Love hath no more heat
And the weak lyric shows the wasted flame ;

Yet will I not, with Buonarroti, say
That they have better fortune who die young ;
For souls that perish, having had no past,

Have no remembrance. Being but a day,
Life bears no record to be said or sung,
And baby-limbo is their lot at last :

But when hereafter we tired pilgrims meet,
Memory shall make for us an everlasting dower.

T. W. PARSONS.

BEACON HILL PLACE, October, 1884.

MADRIGAL LXXIX. — As usual, the nephew has altered and weakened this madrigal, especially the last line, which should read : —

*"Therefore he has least fortune who dwells here longest,
For he who lives least most easily turns to Heaven."*

MADRIGAL LXXXII. — The first part of this poem is a little obscure. Mrs. Howe's version of the third line is perfectly true to the original, although it seems to make the centre draw to the weight instead of the reverse. That Michelangelo wrote this line advisedly, is shown by a second reading, which only substitutes "e" for "si," without changing the sense. The nephew deliberately altered it to read, "Si come peso al centro," and Guasti translates it into prose, "As the centre draws to itself the weight;" but the poet appears to have had a less obvious figure in his mind, possibly the scientific truth of the mutual effect of centre and weight upon each other.

MADRIGAL XCIII. — In the second reading the seventh line is, —

"Negli ultimi anni, al tempo di partire."

SONNETS.

SONNET IV. — This and the preceding sonnet, not here given, refer to the time of Giulio II., for whom Michelangelo decorated the Sistine Chapel. The date is probably 1506. The hostility of this Pope to Florence, where he was cordially hated, accounts for the feeling expressed in these sonnets. A brief *r  sum  * of his life and character may be found in Harford's Life, vol. i. p. 241.

SONNET V. — The great work of the painting of the Sistine Chapel was accomplished by Michelangelo in about twenty months; but as he was obliged to work in a most constrained position, constantly looking upward, he suffered severely in his health for two years. His eyes had become so strained that he could not read a letter or look at a drawing except by holding it above his head.

SONNET XIII. — The following is appended to this sonnet in Guasti's edition : —

“Volevo, signiora, prima che io pigliassi le cose che vostra signoria m’ à più volte volute dare, per riceverle manco indegnamente che io potevo, far qualche cosa a Quella, di mia mano. Di poi, riconosciuto e visto che la gratia d’ Iddio non si può comperare, e che’ l tenerla a disagio è pechato grandissimo, dico mie colpa, e vòlontieri decte cose accecto; e quando l’ arò, non per avèle in casa, mà per essere io in casa loro mi parrà essere im paradiso: di che ne resterò più obrigato, se più posso essere di quel ch’ io sono, a vostra signoria. L’ aportatore di questa sarà Urbino, che sta meco; al quale vostra signoria potrà dire quando vuole ch’ i’ venga a vedere la testa c’ à promesso mostràmi. E a quella mi rachomando. Servidore di vostra signoria MICHELAGNIOLU BUONARROTI.”

SONNET XV.—This fine sonnet was almost unchanged by the nephew, and the translation is therefore Harford’s best. See Appendix.

SONNET XX.—See note to Madrigal XXII.

SONNET XXV.—In the second line “aspiro” in Guasti’s reading is changed to “miro” by the nephew.

SONNET XXXII.—In the fourth line I confess that “fraternal” can only represent the original thought in a very circuitous way; but I am so anxious to preserve the movement of the Italian given by these double endings that I have decided to let it stand. It is a very noble poem. If any one wishes another, not to say a better version, he can consult Symonds.

SONNETS XLIII., XLIV.—See remarks on these poems in the Introduction.

SONNET LI.—The nephew has changed the last lines, which should read:—

“For the soul which has almost arrived at the other shore protects itself from thy arrows with more piteous darts; for fire makes a poor proof of wood already burned.”

SONNET LVI.—Although the nephew made some verbal changes in this difficult sonnet, Mr. Harford has given the thought very finely; but I prefer Symonds’ rendering.

SONNET LIX.—Under this sonnet was written the following:—

"Per carnovale par lecito far qualche pazzia a chi non va in maschera."

"Questo non è fuoco da carnovale, però vel mando di quaresima ; e a voi mi rachomando. Vostro MICHELAGNIOLO."

SONNET LXV. — Michelangelo's friendship for the painter and writer Vasari is well-known. This note accompanies the sonnet :—

"Messer Giorgio, amico caro, voi direte ben ch' io sie vecchio e pazzo a voler far sonetti ; ma perchè molti dicono ch' io son rimbambito, ho voluto far l' ufficio mio. Sc. a dì 19 di Settembre, 1554. Vostro MICHELAGNIOLO BUONARROTI in Roma."

SONNET LXXIII. — "Lacerated" is not a pleasant word, but it is a literal translation from the nephew.

SONNETS LXXXI., LXXXIX. — Only the first eight lines of these two sonnets are by Michelangelo, the nephew having completed the sonnet according to his pleasure. Oh that Wordsworth had possessed Guasti's edition !

CANZONET. — This is the middle stanza of a canzone in three verses. The nephew changed the sense of the last two lines, which should read :—

"For the brief time has become less,
Nor should I be weary [of loving] if it were prolonged."

STANZA. — This pretty verse is the first one of an unfinished poem to his lady.

TRIPLETS. — The thought is so condensed in this poem that it is almost impossible to crowd it into English metre. No poem lets us more fully into the writer's inmost soul. — Grimm has a German translation of it in his Life of Michelangelo.

APPENDIX.

Fashions of the age - every man a rhymeester
more than a mere rhymeester

APPENDIX.

1. THE life of Vittoria Colonna was eventful and interesting, and an acquaintance with it helps to explain the relation between her and the great artist. Beautiful and accomplished, she was also conversant with political life and the great interests of her times, and was yet enthusiastically religious. Early betrothed to the Marquis of Pescara, he became the idol of her imagination and heart. Their union lasted eighteen years, although during much of the time they were separated by his absence on military service. His death, in 1525, left the world desolate to her, and she devoted the remaining years of her life mainly to preserving his memory in the beautiful sonnets addressed to him. I add a translation of one of these, to enable my readers to become better acquainted with the friend so dear to Michelangelo. She died on the 15th of February, 1547, and her last earthly look rested upon the face of her great friend. We cannot better express this relation than in the very words of Vittoria Colonna in a letter to Michelangelo; dated July 20, 1546,—

“Stabile amicizia et legata in cristiano nodo, securissima affezione.”

Her early home was in the beautiful island of Ischia, so lately devastated by earthquakes. She left no children, and her adopted son died before her.

VITTORIA COLONNA TO HER HUSBAND,

MARQUIS DE PESCARA.

SONNET XLI.

“ Parmi che 'l sol non porga il lume usato.”

Methinks the sun sheds not its wonted light
 To us on earth ; nor sister moon on high,
 Planet, nor wandering star now greets my eye,
 Shedding fair beams to beautify the night.
 I see no heart with courage for its shield.
 Bright glory's vanished, and true honor fled,
 And every noble virtue with him dead.
 There lives no leaf on tree, or flower in field.
 Dark is the air, turbid the water's hue ;
 Fire does not warm, nor cool the freshening wind :
 All things have lost their dear familiar way
 Since my fair sun no more on earth I find.
 All Nature's holy order goes astray,
 Or grief conceals the true one from my mind.

E. D. C.

2. Donato Giannotti was a man of the highest character, who had borne a noble part in the Florentine struggle for freedom. In his Dialogues, first published in Florence in 1859, an imaginary conversation with Michelangelo is given, which is of great interest.¹

3. Guasti tells us that a writer in the “Bibliothèque Universelle de Genève” asserts that Louisa de’ Medici was the early love of Michelangelo, and that to her are addressed his amorous complaints. She was a daughter of Lorenzo il Magnifico, and was betrothed to one of the sons of Pierfranco de’ Medici, but died unmarried in 1494, in her seventeenth year. The French writer tries to explain the madrigals as referring to this affection and to the painful separation of the lovers by difference of rank, etc. A few phrases of descrip-

¹ See Guasti’s *Discorso*, p. 26 ; Gotti’s *Life of Michelangelo*, vol. i. p. 249.

tion, as "her blond hair," are supposed to apply to her. Guasti rightly treats this as pure romance, for which there is no historic foundation.¹

4. STANZAS IN PRAISE OF RUSTIC LIFE.

(Imperfect.)

This unfinished poem has never been fully translated, and it offers great difficulties even to Italians. It contains many noble verses, and is worthy of study. I have translated the first stanza rather freely thus : —

" New pleasure, and the best delight,
 To see the wild goats on the rock
 Climbing, to feed, from height to height ;
 To hear the herdsman call his flock,
 Venting in song his feelings bright,
 While his fair maid with scornful air
 Attends the pigs, her pride and care."

In William Hazlitt's edition of Dupper's "Life of Michelangelo," we find a translation of eight stanzas describing the peace and contentment of the shepherd's lot. I give the last one, although it does not fully represent the force of the original, which is somewhat lost by alterations of the nephew.

"If the cow calved, and if the yearling grew,
 Enough for all his wishes fortune yields.
 He honors God, and fears and loves him too ;
 His prayers are for his flocks and herds and fields :
 The doubt, the How, the Why, that fearful crew,
 Disturb not him whom his low station shields ;
 And, favored for his simple truth by Heaven,
 The little that he humbly asks is given."

One is reminded by these stanzas of Burns's "Cotter's Saturday Night," although the poems differ as much in general character as the age and circumstances of the writers.

¹ *Discorso*, p. 17.

The closing verse completes the picture of the strange allegorical figures introduced. I translate from Guasti's prose explanation : —

"Seven of their sons go through the world to make war, and to spread snares only for the good ; and each of them has a thousand limbs. They open and shut hell to chase there the many mortals of whom they make a prey, since with their many limbs they close the way, as ivy makes a wall 'twixt rock and rock."

5. Tommaso dei Cavalieri was the best beloved of all the young people who visited Michelangelo's house, and helped to cheer his advancing age. He was young, rich, of noble birth and great beauty. For him were made the beautiful drawings of Cleopatra and of Ganymede ; and Michelangelo painted his portrait, life-size. He was also a friend of Vittoria Colonna.

6. SONNET XV.—This remarkable sonnet has been more often translated than any other. I have given Harford's admirable version in the text ; but I cannot resist quoting the bold, clear translation of our own Emerson, which does equal justice to it.

Never did sculptor's dream unfold
 A form which marble doth not hold
 In its white block ; yet it therein shall find
 Only the hand secure and bold
 Which still obeys the mind.
 So hide in thee, thou heavenly dame,
 The ill I shun, the good I claim ;
 I, alas ! not well alive,
 Miss the aim whereto I strive.
 Not love, nor beauty's pride,
 Nor fortune, nor thy coldness can I chide,
 If whilst within thy heart abide
 Both death and pity, my unequal skill
 Fails of the life, but draws the death and ill.

I hoped to find some translations by Dr. T. W. Parsons, who has shown such masterly skill and thorough knowledge in his work on Dante ; but these four lines are all that

he has given us. They are the opening lines of a poem addressed to a lady who sent him Michelangelo's sonnets. They are as perfect a translation as we can imagine of this beautiful stanza.

“No master artist e'er imagines aught
That lies not hid, awaiting mortal gaze,
In the rough marble, if but fully wrought
By one whose hand his intellect obeys.”

I cannot deny myself the pleasure of referring also to the beautiful poem of Dr. Parsons for the celebration of Michelangelo's birthday by the New England Women's Club at Boston, in which he hails “the four-souled man.”

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